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STUDIES IN BIOGRAPHY,

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following essays, republished from the *Dublin University Magazine* and other high-class serials, are offered in their present form to the eyes of a public wider than that which has already greeted them, from time to time, with its kindly approval. My reasons for disinterring these literary waifs from the tomb wherein many a good thing lies forgotten or hard of access, may be summed up in one simple statement: feeling a father's pride in my own offspring, I own to a natural wish that others also should have the chance of admiring them—if they can.

Short prefaces are commonly best; and excuses for bringing out a volume of unconnected essays are little needed in this age of manifold readers. Each essay stands outwardly apart from its neighbours, though the line of thought marked out by one of them has sometimes inspired the writing of

another. *Savonarola*, for instance, may be traced back to *Mahomet;* while *Becket* may be held in part accountable for the birth of *Frederic II.* But the true chain of connexion between each and all of them must be felt for deeper down, in the spirit, namely, that pervades the whole volume. Besides any other merits therein discoverable, will be found, I trust, some tokens of an earnest effort to combine those two forms of criticism, which a recent writer has dubbed the Sympathetic and the Judicial. Both forms indeed resolve themselves at last into one, into the spirit of perfect justice towards all kinds of men and things human. But perfect justice means omniscience, and the longer a man lives, the more convinced should he grow of his proneness to go wrong in sounding the mysterious depths of human nature. As far as he can, however, he is bound to use fairly and fearlessly the wits that God has given him; to shut his eyes on no fact, however startling, to shirk no question, however disagreeable, which happens to cross the line of his passing researches. The range of his sympathies should widen with his experiences, so that in due time their growth may become the measure of his judicial powers. His admiration for Bacon's intellect should never lead him to slur over his moral failings: his love of truth,

his sympathy with the good that everywhere challenges notice should force him, in spite of a hundred prejudices, to acknowledge with equal readiness the pure asceticism of Savonarola, the essential earnestness of Mahomet, the lofty patriotism of Pitt, and the cloudier, if more taking brilliance of Sheridan.

Nor will the thoughtful, the fair-dealing critic overlook any seeming trifles that may serve to throw a strong sidelight on the topics of his handling. Without cramming his work with small impertinences, he will readily seize on such minor clues to the reading of human character as the gathered fruits of modern science and daily experience offer to his hand. A given theory may be right or wrong; but no account of Becket's life, so full to outward seeming of strange contradictions, can be deemed wholly truthlike or impartial which overlooks those physical and moral influences, whereby some at least of the contradictions may be cleared up. The mysticism, for instance, imbibed with his mother's milk, and afterwards brought out by the far-reaching tyranny of the Church whose servant he became, was clearly lurking in his blood during the first years of his public life. In like manner Mahomet's visions may be traced back to the peculiar ailments of his childhood and the local

surroundings of his youth. The nervous organism of Savonarola evolved the burning eloquence of the preacher and the prophetic raptures of the seer, as surely as Bacon's easy pleasure-loving temperament accounts for many of the darker passages in his life-story. But to go further into this question of natural causes, would be turning a preface into an essay. Let the showman stand aside, while the curious are examining his wares.

L. J. T.

December, 1864.

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selves under the banner of Him who died on Calvary, it is among the Turanian and the Semitic that Mahomet's Gospel of the sword has gained the bulk of its adherents. And, strangest perhaps of all, both creeds have been built up on a common groundwork; each mighty swarm of living worshippers can trace back its spiritual sources to that tribe of long trampled bondsmen whom Moses led on their rough pilgrimage towards the Promised Land. The religion of one small race that never made much noise among the old-world empires furnished a starting-point alike to the holy teachings of the Christian Gospel and the earthlier utterances of the *Koran*. As Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law delivered unto Moses by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—so Mahomet likewise called upon his countrymen to cut away the idolatrous outgrowths which, for centuries past, had defiled the simple worship inherited from the Hebrew forefather alike of Arabs and of Jews.

The circumstances, however, under which the two religions struggled into light were as different as the leading principles of the creeds themselves. If the overwhelming might of Imperial Rome paved the way for Christ's revelation of a Gospel which emboldened the meanest of its believers to bear with cheerfulness the worst ills of a sway triumphant only over the body, on the other hand the growing disruption of that huge old empire, and the growing weakness of the Persian arms, must have prepared

the Arabs in general—now all but free from any foreign yoke—to listen eagerly to the voice of an apostle sprung from their own ranks, who promised them every happiness in the next world if only they would use his name as a key to universal conquest in the present. As the men who founded them, were the creeds they founded. He who bade Peter put up his sword, and in His last hour besought pardon for His murderers, sealed with His blood a new religion of peace and good-will towards men, such as most Christians have always found it easier to believe in than to illustrate by their daily practice. His own meek, gentle spirit had nothing in common with the fiery zeal of those Christian warriors who baptized whole nations at the point of the sword, or with the all-grasping ambition of those Christian Pontiffs who, in the name of their spiritual Head, claimed utter mastery over all the princes and peoples of the earth. But to the Arab Prophet, for his part, no weapon came amiss in the work of regenerating a fallen world. His mission was peaceful so long as converts could be won in a peaceful way. Had the spirit of his countrymen been other than it was, he might have consented to keep his sword in its sheath. But the Arabs were hot-blooded, given over to idols, plundering, and general turbulence; and the warmth of his own temper conspired with the growing worldliness of his philosophy to launch him on a sea of blood and havoc, whose furthermost billows were afterwards

to force their way into the very heart of Christian Europe. To give up their idols at the mere bidding of a middle-aged man, with fine countenance and flowing beard, was a point which few of Mahomet's countrymen showed any peculiar readiness to yield. It was not till Mahomet flung the sword into the scale that the full beauty of his teaching began to dawn upon the minds of a people willing enough to accept a Paradise, the way to which might be reddened with the blood and cheered by the plunder of many foes.

The founder of Islam "understood his epoch," and felt no scruple in turning it to what he fancied the best account. How far in so doing he sinned against his own conscience—how far, even in his latter years, the workings of religious zeal may have lent to his lower appetites a colour and a glory not their own, are points which no candid thinker may claim to have settled beyond dispute. It is hardly possible in the best known cases to draw the line clearly between wilful imposture and self-delusion. What man can always feel sure of the motives guiding him to particular deeds? The heart being deceitful above all things, is not likely to measure its neighbour's feelings with greater nicety than its own. One thing, however, should be clear to all men of average shrewdness—namely, that self-delusion is a far more common disease than wilful imposture. Swedenborg certainly believed in his own visions. Joanna Southcote almost as

certainly believed in herself as the coming parent of a new Redeemer. Cagliostro and his spirit-rapping successors of to-day should rather, in all likelihood, be shelved among the victims of hysteric seizure, than pilloried among the examples of hypocritical daring. Even to Joe Smith, the worthless prophet of a most debasing creed, we might, if all were known, be inclined to deal out a larger measure of pitying forbearance than the seeming rankness of his imposture will easily let us do.

In the case of men so renowned as Mahomet or Cromwell, a close and candid study of their lives must leave us doubtful perhaps on particular points, but sufficiently certain as to the broad result. The deeper we go into the facts of their history, the more convinced do we become that men like these were every way greater than the mere knaves and impostors whom a hasty prejudice or a shallow philosophy pronounced them to be. The great difficulty, of course, is to get at the facts themselves, stripped of the gorgeous colouring in which flattery may enfold, of the unseemly shadows where with party hatred may have obscured them. That the great Protector was an Englishman of the noblest type, is a truth which Englishmen of all parties are now beginning to acknowledge. A proper friendship for the House of Stuart no longer carries in its train a foolish belief in the self-seeking hypocrisy of their Puritan smiter. And in like

manner, the great Prophet of the Arabs, if he has lost the robe of miracle and romance thrown over his life by native story-tellers, begins also to stand out in fairer and truer proportions than those erewhile revealed to the ignorance or the bigotry of Christian critics. Gibbon's calm insight only foretraced the verdict of modern criticism when he pointed out that Mahomet's success, coupled with his followers' credulity, "would tend more strongly to fortify the assurance of his divine mission, that his interest and religion were inseparably connected, and that his conscience would be soothed by the persuasion that he alone was absolved by the Deity from the obligation of positive and moral laws." The Arabian preacher was not the only saint, by many, whose growth in grace led him further away from the paths of ordinary virtue. If a man has once grounded himself in the belief of his being God's chosen mouthpiece, he is likely enough to mistake the suggestions of human frailty for the whispers of Divine perfection.

For the study of Mahomet's true character the safest of all fields offers itself in the *Koran*. So at least thinks Mr. Muir, whose learned, thoughtful, and well-written work carries out the rule laid down in his own forcible way by the author of *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. In that strange, tangled medley of truth and falsehood, of soaring wisdom and sheer folly, which Mussulmans worship as the highest expression of all truth, spiritual or secular, we are

bidden, not without due cause, to hail the very words of Mahomet's speaking, and therefore the genuine outcome of Mahomet's thought. There is no room, it seems, to doubt that the *Koran*, as put together in the Kaliphat of Abu Bakr, and revised for the last time by Kaliph Othman, contained, with hardly an exception, nothing but what men remembered to have heard from the Prophet's own mouth. Illiterate as he loved to call himself, he had never been in want of scribes, who committed to paper the sentences he might daily utter as revelations from above. Of these papers, Mahomet and his wives may have kept the more important safe in their own hands; but most, if not all of them, were copied again and again for the use of pious Mussulmans during their Prophet's lifetime. The testimony of these papers, collected as they were by command of Abu Bakr, only a twelvemonth after the Prophet's death, was at once checked and strengthened by the faithful memories of many other disciples, who had learned by heart whole chapters, sections—nay, the entire contents —of the holy book. For some fresh passage from the new gospel was recited daily to the people in their public prayers; nor had the proverbial strength of the Arab memory been neutralised by the growing use of pen and ink in an age when the art of writing was still confined to the few.

About two or three-and-twenty years later Othman published, as it were, a new edition of Abu

Bakr's *Koran*, founded on a careful scrutiny of the oldest copies of the former edition. From that day to this the text thus settled has never been disturbed, save by the usual results of careless copying. There is perhaps no other work in the world, thinks Mr. Muir, which, after so many centuries, can show us a text so slightly altered. And the very purport and arrangement of the several parts seem to attest the good faith of the first compilers. Following the order supposed to have prevailed in the daily ritual, they tacked the pieces together in a strange chaotic way, without any regard to their due coherence in point of time, or meaning, or moral fitness. A passage revealed at Mecca comes just after another proclaimed, many years later, from Medina. Verses cancelling or qualifying each other are brought together in the closest neighbourhood. A stray sentence finds its way into the middle of a chapter with which it has nothing whatever to do. The same old stories crop out with the slightest differences here and there. The same ideas, the same doctrines, turn up again and again in nearly the same dress. Abrupt transitions, great gaps of meaning, startle you at every turn. And Mahomet's frailties, as openly confessed by himself, or rebuked by the Angel of the Lord, all find their place in this unquestioning tribute to the worth of a strong, creative, though far from perfect, human soul.

A little less faith in the moral grandeur of such

a prophet, and a little more regard for his intellectual fame, would have made the *Koran* at once more readable, more coherent, and less trustworthy as a witness to its author's character, than it is now. But the first compilers cared nothing for art or reason; and so, through all the bewilderments of their work, we may see the man Mahomet as he really was; may even, with a little care, trace out the progress of his public life. On everything that befell him outwardly or inwardly, from the first day of his *possession*, on every step forward or backward in his eventful career, whether he felt misgivings as to the reality of his heavenly call, or thought for a moment of making terms with the idolatry around him, or took to himself another concubine, or sought to revenge himself upon his foes, some rays of light are pretty sure to be thrown from out the fogs and darkness of this ill-compounded medley. A shrewder arrangement of its contents would have given it a higher historical value; but, for a study of Mahomet's character, the *Koran* as it is, in all its wearisome crudeness and half-crazy pietism, could not be easily outdone. And such was the feeling of the early Moslems. Ayesha but expressed the common belief of her day when, answering some one's queries touching the character of her dead husband, she cried:—"Thou hast the *Koran;* art thou not an Arab, and readest the Arabic tongue? Why, then, takest thou the trouble to inquire of me? For

the Prophet's character is no other than the *Koran*."

As a key, however, to the biographical order of the *Koran*—as a torch to guide us through what else might seem a maze without a plan—the remains of old tradition, the compilations of the earlier biographers, have a certain value which all their frequent falseness and blind extravagance cannot wholly take away. How far these may be trusted must still be a moot point among men the most enlightened. If it is hard to get at the whole truth concerning those who have lived in our own presence, what hope is there of severing the false from the true in the case of heroes embalmed for long centuries in a thick crust of popular superstition and party zeal? When we have quite settled how much of truth there is in the earlier history of the Roman Republic, we shall have gained some clear rules for dividing the wheat from the chaff in many other questions on which faith and scepticism are now at war. To hold the balance quite fair between head and heart, between our rational doubts and our latent sympathies, may be accounted among the highest and rarest efforts of human insight aided by human will. The greater the amount of special knowledge needed for that end, the harder, of course, will the effort be. Who will venture to say for certain that the story of Shakspere's poaching is inconsistent with our knowledge of his general character? In such a case,

where doubt has nothing sure to tread upon, it is always best to admit the story as neither proven nor yet untrue. On the other hand, when some old story-teller talks of Cromwell's being ready to leave home as an emigrant at the very time when written documents prove him to have been thinking of far other things, it were simply weak and childish to give up the reins to an idle fancy at the cost of our common sense.

Touching the known records of Mahomet's life, it is much better to err on the side of scepticism than of credulity. Mr. Muir has done well, we think, in striking out of his text whatever statements were opposed to the witness of the *Koran* itself, or bore the slightest marks of doubtfulness on their own faces. In a long introductory chapter he sets out the various sources for a *Life of Mahomet*, and the principles which guided him in the selection of his matter. His sternness in this respect will hardly be regretted by those who would rather have a few pertinent facts about a man than ever so much agreeable but groundless gossip. With the *Koran* by his side he sifts anew the results evolved by his critical canons. That the task was no easy one to a careful explorer, even with the help of recent workers in the same mine, we may easily imagine. The whole host of miracles which had grown round the memory of a prophet who disclaimed all power to work miracles, had, of course, to be mercilessly torn away. In a heap of other stories,

more probable in themselves, if not in general much nearer the truth, there was sure to be a large admixture of sheer rubbish and a good deal of distorted fact, begotten of haste, passion, party spirit, and a reckless fancy. It was nearly a century after Mahomet's death before any attempt was made to cull out a body of written legend from the mass of oral tradition which had kept on gathering about the Prophet's life. It was not till fifty years later that the first extant Life of Mahomet was written by the partisan of an Abbasside Caliph. It was in the reign of another Abbasside, about 200 years after the Hegira, that the next batch of biographers compiled their works. Nearly a century later flourished the last of those writers whom, according to Mr. Muir, the inquiring student should care to examine. By careful gleaning from these various stores, and the faithful carrying out of his own canons, this author has lent new lustre to the name of a Service fruitful in men of high attainments, through the production of a work as scholarly as that of Dr. Weil, and far wiser, in its general reading of Mahomet's inner life, than that of Dr. Sprenger.

The life of the great Arab Prophet naturally divides itself into two parts. In the former he is the fatherless child bred up in the desert, the youth beloved of his old grandfather, the thoughtful enthusiast announcing his divine message to a rich and loving wife. The latter opens with his flight from

Mecca, and shows him unfurling ever more and more that woful standard of brute force, which the exile of Medina set up in the stead of his earlier and nobler creed. The first and longest section of his life, if outwardly the least eventful, and actually the poorest in respect of trustworthy information, is still the period on which all believers in the train of causes that go to the ripening of any human character must look back with special interest, as the true seed-time of a most portentous harvest, as the natural key to the riddles contained in the record of Mahomet's latter years.

Born about A.D. 570, after the early death of his father Abdallah, the babe Mohammad—the true spelling of Mahomet—was, in pursuance of an old Meccan custom, put out by his highborn mother to nurse with a Bedouin woman, of the tribe of the Bani Saad, in whose charge he abode five years, taking in the fresh air and growing up in "the pure speech and free manners of the desert." At the end of that time, however, his nurse Halíma, frightened by the return of some fits which had first overtaken the child a year before, brought him once more back to his mother Amína, in the firm belief that he had a devil. This time the mother could not persuade the fond but ignorant nurse to take back a foster-child thus early marked with the symptoms of a disease which, to any rational mind, will easily account for much that were else obscure in Mahomet's character, and also for much of the

reverence paid him by a people comparatively unskilled in tracing the subtler manifestations of bodily suffering. These fits or trances continually recur in the true story of Mahomet's life; and the Prophet himself might well be excused for believing, with his friends, in the divine parentage of seizures which the more ignorant or the more hostile would just as readily ascribe to the Father of Evil.

The child's fondness for his late nurse never forsook him in his riper years. Whenever she came to see him he welcomed her with marks of warm affection, and sent her by no means empty away. And many years after, says Mr. Muir, "when on the expedition against Táif, he attacked the Bani Hawázin [of whom the Bani Saad were a portion], and took a multitude of them captive, they found ready access to his heart by reminding him of the days when he was nursed among them." To love strongly and to remember a past kindness were among the salient traits of Mahomet's character. The memory of his first wife Khadíjah clung close to his heart, even when the smiles of his charming Ayesha might have wooed him into forgetfulness of all former joys. "No, by God!" he cried, in answer to the latter's claim to have more than replaced the former, "there can never be a better than she. When men despised me, she had faith in me; when I had no other friend in the world, she stood by me and gave me comfort."

Only a year after their reunion the boy's mother

was lost to her son by death. For her too he kept a tender place in his heart, being moved to tears when, long afterwards, he visited her grave at Abwa, halfway between Mecca and Medina. For the next two years he figures as the ward and darling of his noble old grandfather, Abd al Muttalib, the worthy heir to the dignities and power of his father Hashim. The old man's death, in 578, deprived the Meccan sheikhs of an able leader, and his own family of a powerful guardian. His second surviving son took charge of Abdallah's orphan child, and little Mahomet had no cause to regret the transfer thus made by his dying grandsire.

At twelve years of age, the boy, at his own earnest prayer, was allowed to accompany his kind uncle on a caravan journey to Syria. Their road would take them near Petra, Jerash, Ammon, and other ruinous remains of Arabia's commercial glory in the days when all intercourse between the surrounding countries was still carried on by land. As they passed by the bare salt margin of the Dead Sea, they would hear from Jewish lips of the doom which had once befallen the buried Cities of the Plain. Every here and there they would come upon some Jewish settlement, or mark the prevalence of that other creed which still lingers in the land of its birth by the side of its Mahometan rival and supplanter. The boy, being naturally quick, and coming of a stock that ripens sooner than our own, would lay up in his memory a good

store of mental provender; and, if he really talked with any of the Nestorian monks of Bostra, it is not unlikely that the seeds of his future enmity to all forms of image-worship may have been sown by the strenuous teachings of a sect remarkably hostile to the grosser tendencies, which already began to mar the olden purity of the Christian faith.

Such seeds, if sown they were on this Syrian journey, could not but be quickened by what he afterwards saw and heard at the yearly fair of Ocátz, held in a shady spot, within three days' march of Mecca. These fairs formed the Olympic games of southern Arabia. Trials of strength and eloquence were waged by champions from the different tribes. Rewards were given to the best chronicler of Arab legend, to the most poetic singer of his sweetheart's graces, or his countrymen's feats in war. Arabs of all creeds—Sabean, Jewish, Christian—flocked, once a year, to the common mart and playground of a race at other times split up into a number of discordant tribes. Even here the quarrelsome Arab spirit could not always be kept down; and a war broke out between the Koreish and the Bani Hawázin, which raged, with intervals, for several years. As one of the Koreish leaders, Abu Tálib played his part in the long struggle, and Mahomet also drew his bow in defence of his uncles and his tribe. But fighting pleased him less than listening to the songs of rival bards, and picking up all kinds of stray knowledge from many different

hands. His acquaintance with the Jews, begun some years before at Medina, and improved on his Syrian journey, ripened at Ocátz into a fair amount of hearsay knowledge touching their history and their sacred books. From the Christians, fewer in number, he seems to have learned less, and that little in a distorted shape; but the preaching of Coss, the Christian Bishop of Najran, could not, if really heard by Mahomet, have failed to deepen within him the sure conviction of truths which, held in common by Jews and Christians, were unknown, or well-nigh lost, to the idol-worshippers at the Kaabah.

While he was yet a youth, Mahomet was one of those Koreishites who took an oath together to enforce redress for all wrongs done by culprits too powerful to have justice meted out to them in the usual way. To the forming of this league, which, to a certain extent, made up for the want of any overruling chief in Mecca, Mahomet in after years looked back with special pride. "I would not," said he, "exchange for the choicest camel in all Arabia the remembrance of being present at the oath which we took in the house of Abdalla, when the Bani Háshim, Bani Zorah, and Bani Tayn swore that they would stand by the oppressed."

Meanwhile the young man led, on the whole, a calm, pure, contented life; admired by all for his handsome person, respected for his upright character and modest bearing. The name of "Mahomet the

Faithful," by which he was commonly called, bears ample witness to his youthful virtues; while other stories, said to have come from his own mouth, prove how thoroughly his better nature did, in those days, get the mastery over his animal desires. Of his general pursuits we know almost nothing. Perhaps he sometimes went on business with this or the other caravan. One thing, however, is fairly proven—namely that, like other lads of his own age, he sometimes tended "the sheep and goats of the Meccans upon the neighbouring hills and valleys." Whether he did so from his own choice or as a point of mere duty, certain it is that such an employment would encourage a youth of his earnest, dreamy nature to brood and muse, in the lonely night-watches, under the solemn stars, on the mysteries of life and death, of heaven, and the world to come.

At twenty-five, by the help of good Abu Tálib, his nephew was despatched to Syria, in charge of merchandise belonging to a wealthy kinswoman, the widow Khadíjah. Mahomet's natural shrewdness, and perhaps some past experience, enabled him to contend with the proverbial cunning of the Syrian merchants, so that he gained more than the average profits on Khadíjah's wares. Charmed alike with his good management and his engaging presence, the comely widow of forty cast eyes of love on her new subaltern. Sounded by one of her maids touching his readiness to be wooed by so rich

and ripe a lady, Mahomet showed himself not unwilling; and the marriage speedily took place, not without some passing remonstrances of the lady's father against so paltry a son-in-law.

This marriage, destined to last for many happy years, raised Mahomet, at one bound, from poverty to wealth. The heir to a few lean camels became lord of large flocks and herds; the poor dependant of an impoverished uncle was now master of many slaves, and could hold up his head among the leading housefathers of his native town. Once respected by the few, he could now command the full measure of homage due by the many to his undoubted charms of mind and body. A well-made, spare figure, not too tall, but quite commanding, topped by a large head rising from a slender, finely moulded neck; his black hair falling off from a broad forehead in slight curls over his ears; his large black eyes darting their keen restless glances from under the black arched eyebrows; a thin high nose, slightly curved; teeth far apart, in a large, slightly sensual mouth; a long black beard; a countenance pensive, yet often lit up with the play of humour, passion, or ready wit, make up the picture of Mahomet's outward man in these days of his youthful prime. He walked with a quick firm step, the body thrown slightly forward; spoke seldom, but always gracefully to the point; broke out, at times, into a hearty irrepressible laugh; and showed by the swelling veins upon his forehead, how hard he strove to keep

down the wrath that sometimes raged within him. To his countrymen he mostly appeared as the worthy citizen—of morals certainly pure, of an understanding clear and strong—in whose sound judgment, guarded by an unswerving sense of right, all men might safely put their trust. The depths of his nature were only revealed to his wife, or worked unseen within him when he left the hot oven of his native town, to indulge his thirst for dreaming amidst the barren loneliness of the surrounding hills.

One instance of Mahomet's cleverness in settling a difficult question happened about ten years after his marriage, while the men of Mecca were engaged in rebuilding the Kaabah. That holy cynosure of Arab worship, dating, it was said, from the time of Abraham himself, and known to have existed for centuries before that of Mahomet, had been rent to its foundations by unusually heavy floods. The men of the Koreish resolved to build it up anew. Presently a dispute arose among their chiefs as to the hands that should replace in the wall that famous Black Stone which, ever since the birth of Islam, has been yearly kissed by crowds of Mussulman pilgrims. At length they agreed to refer the difficulty to the first man who should enter the court of the Kaabah at a certain gate. The chance umpire proved to be Mahomet. Laying his mantle on the ground, and putting the stone upon it in the middle, he bade a man from each of the four Koreishite clans take up a corner of the mantle,

while his own hands guided the stone into its right place. If the umpire's wisdom raised him higher than before in the regards of his fellow-townsmen, the seeming call from above, which brought him thither at the right moment, might quicken within him the superstitious belief in God's especial favour towards himself.

Of the children born to him by Khadíjah, the eldest and the youngest, both boys, died in their infancy. The other four were girls, of whom one only, Fatima, survived her father, and that for no long time. In the place of his eldest child Mahomet repaid the kindness of his uncle Abu Tálib, by adopting one of his younger children, the boy Ali, whose fame as one of the earliest converts to Islam was enhanced by many years of loyal, by not a few deeds of heroic service to the person and the cause of his adoptive father.

Another favourite, nearer his own age, was Zeid, the Christian slave of Khadíjah, who presently made him over to her husband in acknowledgment of the love he bore so good and useful a follower. When Zeid's friends came to seek him, with offers of large ransom for the youth who had been stolen from his mother years before, he declined to leave his new master; and Mahomet straightway adopted him as his own son. From this Zeid, whose parents were both Christian, from Khadíjah's cousins, Othmán and Waraka, and from two or three other friends or kinsmen, Mahomet, about this time,

was probably hearing many things concerning the religious movements already rife in various parts of Arabia. At any rate, towards his fortieth year, his former ponderings over the great question which all earnest thinkers have, at one time or another, to argue for themselves, grew into a strong all-mastering desire to grasp the smallest promise of some palpable issue. A storm of doubts, anxieties, wild dreams, and just conceptions kept raging within his soul. For days together, with or without his wife, he hid himself in a cave among the bare, black, rugged hills, that shut in and seemed to press upon his native town. In fasting, prayer, and wild outpourings of rude disjointed poetry, he gave vent to the feelings which, at other times, relieved themselves in fits of actual but illusive trance. The visions which he then saw, born, as they really were, of nerves overstrung from mental worry and bodily weakness, he not unnaturally mistook for revelations of another world. Did they come from heaven or from hell? The torture of doubts suggested by his own brain would help to throw him into fresh trances; and thus his mind and body would keep preying upon each other, until some happy turn of events, perhaps the native buoyancy of his temper, let in the saving light of certainty on a struggle that might else have ended in death or downright madness. Like David, Luther, Bunyan, and a host of smaller men than these, he had to plunge far and often into the deep mire

where no water is, before his feet rested on the firm ground of a faith which never again could play him false.

In several passages of the *Koran* are dimly shown to us the long agony of Mahomet's mind, the weary tossings between either shore of hope and despair. Once he had begun to deem himself the mere soothsayer his countrymen called him, when the angel came and bade him preach on without fear, for they who scorned him should be cast into hell. At another time he stood on the brink of suicide; but again his eyes were opened to the sight of the Angel Gabriel, and a voice from heaven assured him that he was indeed the chosen Prophet of the Lord. At length the long ferment came to a peaceful end, and at the ripe age of four and forty the son of Abdallah began openly to preach his new gospel:—"There is no God but God and Mahomet is his Prophet." Hitherto he had only preached, as any other mortal, against the false gods of Mecca, in behalf of the purer creed taught to his sons by Father Abraham. Now he proclaimed himself the one authorized mouthpiece of a new revelation to a world which, having outgrown or fallen away from the teachings of former prophets, needed once more to be set upon the one true way to everlasting life.

His first converts were they of his own household. His faithful wife, his two adopted sons, his

wife's cousin Waraka, his old friend and fellow-clansman Abu Bakr, known to Moslems as "the true one" were among the famous few who shared with Mahomet the dangers and the hardships of his earlier ministry. Old Abu Tálib could not give up the faith and customs of his fathers, but he swore that never, while he lived, should any one dare to trouble his good nephew.

And the old man bravely kept his word to the last day of his life. It was not long before Mahomet's preaching roused the hatred or the fears of many powerful opponents. Some of his own kinsmen sided against him. By the time his converts numbered forty, the growing ill-will had ripened into open persecution. A creed which attacked their favourite idols was sure to inflame a host of bigoted Meccans against those who dared to question the popular belief. In one way or another many of the new converts were made miserable enough. By Mahomet's advice, a certain number of them withdrew for safety into Christian Abyssinia. Himself and some of his chief followers were still saved from all serious harm by the aid of powerful friends or kinsmen. But ere long the persecution grew hotter and more daring. The Prophet had for a moment stooped to a cunning compromise with the reigning idolatry. His hearers were quite ready to acknowledge one God over all, if they might still pray to an army of interceding goddesses. But Mahomet soon returned to a better

mind. The good-will of his countrymen was but a poor salve for his troubled conscience. At Gabriel's command he publicly altered the verses in which he had spoken favourably of the false goddesses of Mecca. His enemies redoubled their former hatred. Fresh batches of Moslem sufferers found peace and favour in Abyssinia. The more unfriendly of his own tribe would have coaxed or threatened Abu Tálib into forsaking a nephew whose preaching was largely spiced with angry abuse. For one moment the old man wavered; but moved alike by Mahomet's unflinching firmness* and tender sorrow at the thought of losing so kind a friend, he renewed his former promise to shield him, come what might. At length, in fear and rage, the rest of the Koreish banded together against the house of Háshim, to which Mahomet belonged. For two or three years Mahomet, his kinsmen, and his followers were fairly blockaded in the Háshimite quarter of the town, with no other outlet than the steep hills beyond; with few supplies, save such as might be furnished stealthily by secret friends, or bought at ruinous prices from timid traders.

While the children of Háshim stood by their threatened kinsman, he for his part was looking

* "If they brought the sun to my right hand and the moon to my left," was the Prophet's answer, "to force me from my undertaking, verily, I would not desist therefrom until the Lord made manifest my cause, or I perished in the attempt."

out for help from other sources than heaven alone. At the time of the yearly fairs he and his friends could leave their shelter in fear of no worse treatment than a shower of hard words, or a blow from some rude missile. His first efforts at converting the stranger met with small return. But when in the third year of their suffering, the ban was partially removed from his kin, and Mahomet found himself within a few weeks bereft of his loving wife and loyal guardian, the grief and the danger of the moment urged him to renewed efforts and bolder schemes. His journey to Tayif, in January, 620, ended in a shameful flight from the stones and insults of a furious mob; but a timely meeting in March with some pilgrims of Medina, proved to be the turning of a new page in the annals of Arabia and of Islam. Two years later, seventy-three converts from Medina, meeting Mahomet by night in a lonely glen among the Meccan hills, swore to stand by the Prophet and give him shelter, at whatever cost to themselves. Presently the bulk of the Meccan Moslems, in number about 150, were on their way to the friendly precincts of Medina. Mahomet himself, with his friend Abu Bakr, stayed behind a little longer, until some hostile movement of the Koreish warned them also to get away betimes. As they were hiding in a mountain cave from the pursuit, real or fancied, of their foes, Abu Bakr talked of the danger to which they were exposed. "Think not thus," said the Prophet,

"we are but two, but in the midst of us stands a third—even God." At length after some eight days of anxious hiding and toilsome journeying, the two came in sight of their appointed refuge, on the 28th June, 622.

For the first few months after his arrival at Medina the Prophet busied himself with the new arrangements called for by his change of home and personal surroundings. There was a mosque to build, a new wife to care for, and another to marry. The better to bind his new allies to his Meccan followers, he founded a brotherhood, in which every Meccan paired off with a citizen of Medina. He had to issue—by command of the Angel Gabriel—fresh laws and precepts for the governance, in all things worldly and spiritual, of a body of believers by this time several hundred strong. His own band of refugees had to be comforted under the wasting fever which lurked in the rich moist verdure surrounding their new abodes. Medina itself was not free from its share of enemies, open or concealed, to the new settlers; and in its neighbourhood were some Jewish tribes with whom Mahomet strove to cement an alliance founded on common interests and a common belief, so far as concerned the past, in a certain collection of holy books. His new religion being but the long-promised supplement to theirs, why should they not agree to become fast friends, helping each other in time of need, turning at prayer-time towards the same Holy City, and

differing peacefully from each other as to the justice of Mahomet's claim to rank with the prophets of the Old Testament?

But the Jews accepted this new Messiah as little as they had accepted the Christ of six centuries before. The Prophet reviled them in new chapters of his *Koran*, altered the Mussulman *Kiblah* from Jerusalem to Mecca, and presently assailed the stiff-necked unbelievers with the sword. This was not the first of his departures from the peacefulness of his earlier practice. The death of Khadíjah and the meeting with the men of Medina had given a fatal spur to feelings erewhile repressed or weakened by holier influences and higher aims. His coarser self began to rise uppermost, as his followers increased in numbers and in the fierceness of their loyal zeal. At Medina he was already, in fact, a king of many hundred subjects burning to obey his least command, ready to lay down their lives for a master who fed their earthly passions while he seemed to work most strongly on their spiritual hopes and fears. Prophet, priest, lawgiver, all in one, he gave way to the lower promptings of his Arab nature—to the lustfulness that stained his latter years—to the revengeful spirit which, erewhile breathed forth in verses of the *Koran*, was now leading him straight up the path of warlike conquest that looks so glorious to eyes of flesh. Mahomet fell at the point where the Christian Saviour rose highest. From the time when he married Ayesha, and sent forth his followers to lie

in wait for Koreishite caravans, he wandered further and further from the great example set by Him who, for all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, refused to fall down and worship the Evil Spirit. The higher he seemed to rise in the blinded fancy of his countrymen, the lower he fell from his early nobleness, from the stern simplicity, the patient earnestness, the unworldly yearnings of his former faith.

It was only seven months after the Hegira, or flight from Mecca, when Mahomet ordered his first raid on the property of his Meccan foes. He was then already about fifty-three years old. Ten years later he had breathed his last, conqueror of all Arabia, and head of an army strong enough to meet the legions of Heraclius in fair fight. But a few years after his death his captains had overrun Persia, and destroyed the Christian kingdoms neighbouring the Red Sea. To these great issues had the heaven-sent prophet of Islam been drawn onward, step by step, through a fierce thirst for vengeance on his late persecutors—through an impatient longing to display his power against the unbeliever—through a politic desire to guard his new-born empire from premature decay. No deep-laid scheme of world-wide dominion need be assumed in the case of such a man. The circle of his ambition and his necessities widened as he moved on. The raid in quest of plunder turned into a battle for life and death. When once his followers had tasted blood, it was

easier for Mahomet to let them slake their thirst in his behalf than to keep them together by more peaceful means. Between a fair prospect of revenge and plunder on the one hand, and certain Paradise on the other, what true son of Ishmael could keep his hands from shedding blood? From fighting against unfriendly Koreishites or stiff-necked Jews, it was but an easy step to wage wars for the conquest or the conversion of neighbouring states. Not till after six years of warfare did Mahomet show the full height of his fanaticism—for mere lust of power or glory it cannot be called—by summoning the greatest monarchs of his day to cast aside their false creeds and accept the teaching of "Mahomet, the Apostle of God."

The excess of his own zeal kindled within his followers a fire which lent to his own a yet fiercer flame. Each new victory was a fresh mark of God's favour; each new defeat a passing trial for God's elect, a snare to mislead the heaven-doomed foe. A faith which hallowed deeds of blood and raised pillage into a pleasing duty, could not but hit the fancy of a people naturally prone to most forms of robbery and outrage. And the new fatalism taught by the *Koran* inspired the more cowardly Moslems with a passing courage, while it nerved the arms of their bolder comrades for deeds of almost superhuman daring. What mattered it to a true believer how great the risks he ran, if the hour and the manner of his death were nicely settled

beforehand by the Eternal Decrees? Nor was it a slight temptation to battle for the cause of Islam when success might bring with it not only wealth and fame, but also a timely addition to the joys of a harem sanctioned by the laws and the example of Mahomet himself.

To trace out the true history of Mahomet's latter years would need a separate essay as long as the present. In Mr. Muir's last two volumes the curious reader will find ample means for such a task. Enough here to say that those volumes contain little or nothing to startle, how much soever to sadden, a thoughtful and observant mind. Through all those pages, soiled as they often are with tales of gross treachery, of fearful outrage, of shameful lust, there is not a shadow of evidence tending to convict their hero of wilful cold-blooded imposture. Of pious fraud there may be a few seeming tokens, but that is all. Cruel, lustful, bigoted, superstitious, false to opponents, time-serving often, and latterly fond of power, he may indeed have been; but never in his worst moments was he quite untrue to the Hermit of Mount Hira, to the earnest preacher against his countrymen's false gods. His worst crimes will meet their match in the lives of great men, dear alike to Christian and to Jew. But his greater qualities, visible enough for some fifty years of his life—his fearless search for truth—his deep sense of God's almighty oneness—his gratitude for help given—his loving-tenderness to-

wards friends and family—his sympathy with the weak and suffering—his natural clemency towards the fallen—the grand simplicity of his heart and habits, still shine forth in never so fitful and broken gleams through the moral darkness of his latter days. The saint of Mecca has grown, by no uncommon process, into the sinner of Medina. But "the flowerets of Eden" have not quite perished, though "the trail of the serpent is over them all."

The very strength of his belief in his divine mission accounts for many of the darker passages in his career. Mahomet was neither the first nor the last of those who have taken to their hearts the comforting notion that God's chosen servants can do no wrong. Popes and Puritans, Calvinists, Pharisees, and Brahmins, have all, in their several ways, exemplified the same truth. Many men in all ages, have honestly believed that they were doing God service while they merely obeyed their lower instincts. Many another has made his excellence in things spiritual a plea for setting aside the restraints of vulgar morality. How much more would a man of Mahomet's nature, believing in himself as the last and greatest prophet of the Lord, be inclined to mistake the echo of his own thoughts for the voice of Heaven—to hail the dark clouds that blurred his soul as tokens of God's wrath against his enemies! While his faith in himself as Allah's chosen messenger was yet young and timorous, his conscience still held its sway, more or

less firmly, over his thoughts and deeds. But that faith once fairly set up within him, and sealed by many marvellous tokens, it was easy for such a man to lose by degrees his old power of distinguishing right from wrong, until he had learned to encourage assassins who rid him of unfriendly critics—to command the wholesale massacre of Jewish prisoners—to attack a party of Arabs travelling peacefully during the Holy Month—to long after and marry, by divine permission, his friend's wife—and to add continually fresh wives to his harem on the plea of ensuring an heir of his own loins.

Yet, in spite of his clouded conscience, these last years of Mahomet's life reveal to us many glimpses of a character, noble even in its decay. Think of the Prophet, in the height of his power, helping Ayesha in her household duties, giving away alms freely with his own hands, mending his own clothes, granting free access to all comers, dealing out equal justice to rich and poor, praying and preaching regularly in the mosque, humbling himself before Allah for the loss of his darling Ibrahim, calling on princes and peoples to worship the one true God, and outdoing the measure of his cruelty towards the Jews by that of his mercy towards the sinners of Mecca, whose persecutions had driven him into long-protracted exile. The love he bore his near friends and kindred was repaid by them in full. To the last he utterly disclaimed all power to work miracles, other than the *Koran* itself, which

after all, he said, was Heaven's miracle—not his own. His dying hours were not those of a mere impostor. Having listened for the last time to the prayers he could no longer lead, he employed the small remnant of his failing strength in exhorting his people to prepare for death by living in faith and righteousness, and in beseeching their pardon for any wrongful act of his own, as he prayed God to pardon them all their sins. Staggering home to his death-bed, he presently passed away in Ayesha's arms: short prayers for pardon, hurried utterances of pious hope, and low words of tender comfort struggling forth by turns from his tremulous lips.

For a view of the character and contents of Mahomet's *Koran*, we must refer the reader to the enlightened comments of Mr. Muir. As might be expected, a searching study of that strange book reveals a close coincidence between the outer and inner records of the Prophet's life. The dreamy vigour of his earlier days stands out in clear contrast with the tamer, if more practical tenor of his later outpourings. The clear stream grows muddier, the swift stream slackens in its pace as it passes from its mountain cradle towards the great world of waters. There is less and less of high inspiration, more and more of worldly craft and shrewdness, as the reader follows the true order of his text. Everywhere, of course, there is much of sheer nonsense, of wild superstition, of glaring fallacy, mis-statement, self-contradiction. Some

gross imagery, and not a few immoral precepts stamp it as the work of man. Yet, such as it is, that "confused ferment of a great rude human soul" became the groundwork of a mighty fabric, which, after twelve centuries, stands partially ruinous, but very far still from falling to pieces. With every drawback, the religion taught by Mahomet was purer, manlier, than any found among the Arabs of his day. If the musty Judaism, the debased Christianity of the seventh century, fell before the banners of a gospel which brought men into closer communion with one pure, invisible, all-seeing God, mighty to reward or punish in the world to come for deeds done in the present, their fall was hardly a matter of more regret than that of the idol-worship in which most of the Arab tribes had long been wallowing. If the grosser parts of the *Koran* appealed to the coarser instincts of a race sunk in sensual delights, the nobler passages expressed a faith to whose full solemnity the bulk of Christians would find it hard enough to rise. Whatever else it did, the *Koran* created a nation out of a number of rude, isolated tribes. It awakened the slumbering forces of the Eastern mind, and organized a general revolt against the overgrown empires of the Cæsars and the Khosroes. If the tribes of Arabia have returned to their old disunion, they still pay tribute to Mahomet's successor; while a long line of Asiatic Kalíphs and European Sultans has handed down the faith, and governed millions

of men in close accordance with the rules laid down in Mahomet's *Bible*. Say what we will, Islám is neither dead nor likely to die. Sensual, bigoted, cowed by the pressure of western civilization, the Turks of to-day still reign as conquerors in the halls of the Cæsars; nor have the Christian princes of modern Spain succeeded in eclipsing the memories of those glorious days when Toledo was the seat of Arabian learning, and the arts of two continents flourished beneath the shadow of the Alhambra.

THOMAS BECKET.

WITHIN a twelvemonth's space there came out two lives of the same person, drawn evidently from the same sources, but differing from each other in tone and purport as broadly as the nineteenth century differs from the twelfth; as strikingly as the free self-rule of Protestant England differs from the priestly despotism of Papal Rome. Stranger still, both books have been written by educated Englishmen. The Life of Becket by Canon Robertson, is a fair sample of English good sense and manly dealing. Got up with much care and critical fulness, correct and clear in style, quiet of manner, liberal of view, yet thoroughly Protestant in spirit, his just yet generous record of the ill-fated archbishop speaks to us a language ringing with the life and lustiness of the present day. On the other hand, in the Life of Becket by Canon Morris, nearly everything seems to remind us of a quaint half-legendary past. Written with evident pains, and free perhaps from wilful distortions, but wholly feeble in tone, revelling in the wildest of old wives' tales, overlaid with

the mawkish slang of Romish religionism, this last addition to the lives of Catholic saints and martyrs reproduces, with blind though honest partiality, the undoubting spirit of the age when Becket flourished, and his earliest biographers penned their minute and high-coloured stories of the pet saint and wonder-worker of mediæval England. To turn from the former of these books to the latter seems much like reading a page from Geoffrey of Monmouth after a paragraph in yesterday's *Times*.

By what principle the Canon of Northampton has been guided in the choice of telling incidents, we cannot certainly say, but to all seeming the legends which a Protestant critic finds hardest to swallow, are exactly those which he has deemed fittest food for the babes of his own communion. "Credo quia impossibile est" is the rule he appears to follow, especially if the impossible thing be vouched for by writers of Becket's own time or household. Rejecting the poetic tale of Becket's Syrian parentage which, unknown to Fitz-Stephen, John of Salisbury, or even the holy martyr himself, has too often passed current with writers of our own day, he has the courage to tell us with a serious face, how even dogs turned loathingly away from scraps of food left by the primate's murderers; how some of Becket's worst foes came to an early or a painful end; how the arm which had nearly been severed in trying to guard him from his murderers' blows, was healed a year after by the ghost of Becket himself; and

how, in gratitude for some past service, the saint restored to life and health a child who had lain four days as if dead of a fearful cancer.

On the other hand, Mr. Robertson's volume, if not the best that might be written, seems on the whole the fullest that has yet been written on a subject which many writers have handled in many ways. It sets before us gathered into one view nearly all the facts and fallacies, the likelihoods and contradictions, the doubts and misconceptions, which lay scattered in varying quantities and degrees of mixture over the field of past inquiry. If it pretends to offer no essentially new reading of that memorable mystery, Becket himself, it does more than any former life of him to clear away the mass of rubbish in which his outward self has hitherto been imbedded. Mr. Robertson has at least added something valuable to the literature of a question full of various interest. Diligent in exploring all available ground, careful in his choice of fit materials, cautious in argument, generally happy in his conclusions, he is entitled to the praise of having wrought out a clear and useful summary of all that we are likely to know concerning the stoutest English champion of priestly privilege and Papal world-rule.

If truth always lay in the agreement, or could be drawn from the collision of many witnesses, we should by this time have gained a satisfactory insight into the character of Becket and his age. Many

indeed are the pens that his memory has kept at work upon him from the day of his so-called martyrdom until now. Clerks of his household, faithful secretaries, intimate friends, some of whom had basked in the sunshine of his earlier, and shivered in the darkness of his latter days, bore witness briefly or at length, with many flourishes or in simple terms, to the high talents, the striking virtues, the pomp, the learning, the personal charms, the stern enthusiasm of their departed friend and spiritual father. Their lead was followed by a long line of simple chroniclers who, dating from the splendid reign of Henry II., discoursed and fabled about many things and persons, until the Wars of the Roses and the dawn of a later literature put out their feeble lights for ever. But modern history took up in her turn and handed on the old familiar tale, with divers changes demanded by the spirit of an age which had little faith in the marvellous, and still less in the saint whose shrine had been plundered, whose bones burnt at the suggestion of that self-willed iconoclast, Henry VIII. Becket's fame, however, survived the rough handling of his fiercest assailants, to regain in these days, through the kindliness, the crotchets, or the religious sympathies of some able writers, no trifling share of its olden fragrance.

But the truth regarding Becket is nearly as hard to reach as the truth regarding the early days of Rome. From the oldest accounts of him, penned

chiefly by his devoutest worshippers, themselves men of middling capacity, of the narrowest culture, grossly superstitious even in that age of gross superstition, we only shape out an image as unlike any normal commixture of flesh and spirit, as the first töy you give a baby is unlike aught seen in books of natural history. Between their discrepancies, mistakes, contradictions, their statements often doubtful, sometimes transparently untrue, their wilful reticences and wild exaggerations, their love of fancifully profane comparisons, the prosing rhetoric of one, the childish gossip of another, the feeble sophistries and grovelling morality of almost all, the real story of Becket's life fades one-while into a series of nursery tales, anon transforms itself into a dull didactic romance for pious young ladies.

Writing for a public already trained to look on their lost primate with partisan or idolatrous eyes, carrying with them the feelings of all who hated the Norman or revered the priest, living, too, in days of general profligacy and disregard for truth, these men were not likely to sift evidence making in their hero's favour, or to bring into open court matters which the most of them would deem it wisest to slur over, or even sometimes to forget. And as for the chroniclers of that era who allude to Becket, it is bare truth to say that their accounts are merely improved editions of all that was most fabulous in the first biographers. In the dim religious light of those days, Becket's story speedily

assumed a startling likeness to that of the Divine Master, with whom the living Becket loved to compare himself in language now deemed worthy only of French courtiers or the followers of Mr. Prince. If they of his own household could not keep their pens from lying legends and feeble parodies of Holy Writ, the scribblers of the following century were still less unscrupulous in the ornaments they heaped around a shrine already blazing with too many borrowed gems.

Turning to the modern writers, we have the old uncertainty meeting us in new forms. In their hatred of popes or prelates, zealous Protestants and shallow thinkers could see no good whatever in the man whom so many generations of monk-ridden Englishmen had delighted to honour. They stripped the idol of its gorgeous garments, to find beneath them nothing but a heap of worthless rags. Becket became a by-word among his countrymen for wanton ingratitude and hypocritical self-seeking. At length Hume's manly and philosophical estimate of a character entirely different from his own, turned somewhat in Becket's favour the current which had been setting against him ever since the English Reformation. After a time the fallen idol became once more an object of extravagant worship, not only with the regular Romanist, who believed in him as a recognised part of the Papal system, but also with those English Protestants who learned in the school of Messrs. Newman and Pusey to sympathize

with a churchman fighting for his order against the supremacy of the secular power. Between the shallow assumption that scorned him as a selfish hypocrite, and the sickly religionism that worshipped him as a Christian saint and martyr, little was done to better the example set by Hume, until the labours of Dean Milman and Canon Robertson opened up to all careful readers the promise of yet more precious fruit to come.

If the last-named writers have not wholly cleared up the mystery of Becket and his times, they have at least shown how much of the darkness hitherto surrounding it could be rolled aside, at the bidding of a manlier and keener criticism than that which hurries us through the brilliant pages of Dr. Lingard, or tries our patience under the slipshod maundering of Dr. Giles. While Mr. Morris has only succeeded in harping on the same cracked string as so many Romanists or Romanizing Anglicans did before him, we are glad to welcome Mr. Robertson as no unworthy follower in the track of the masterly historian of Latin Christianity.

Among the later outgrowths of mediæval fancy appeared that touching story about Becket's mother, which, springing perhaps from the same source as the old English ballad of Lord Beichan, has found such special favour with writers who care more to amuse the world, or to carry out some foregone conclusion, than to test the likelihood of circumstances strange enough to call for the closest

scrutiny. On that story we need not dwell here. Of course Mr. Robertson, following Dean Milman, rejects it without a question; and even Mr. Morris fears it is too poetical to be true. That such a story, told for the first time a hundred years after the primate's death, and belied by the silence or the explicit statements of Becket himself and his contemporaries, should afterwards have been so generally received, is matter enough for a moment's wonder; but another feeling is stirred within us at the thought of an able English writer backing his theory by an appeal to the peculiar whiteness of Becket's hands. Our English ladies will laugh to hear that small white hands are but the witching evidences of their Eastern descent. Not content with finding him a Saracen mother, several authors have robbed Becket of his other parent; and on the theory of his Saxon name and birth, Mons. Thierry has built up a complete romance of history, which falls to pieces like a house of cards, at the first touch of truthful criticism. To the claim of Saxon parentage, "the early biographers," says Dr. Milman, "not only give no support, but furnish direct contradiction;" one of them expressly affirming his hero's Norman origin, while another makes Gilbert Becket follow up his suit to Archbishop Theobald on his son's behalf, by pleading their joint descent from the same knightly forefathers in Normandy. That the name of Becket was no less Norman than Saxon, Mr. Robertson

has conclusively shown; and we, for our part, would clinch his arguments by holding up those delicately small white hands in proof of Norman parentage alone. From a careful comparison of original statements it seems clear that Becket's parents, as he himself averred, were both Londoners; but that his forefathers, at least on Gilbert's side, had dwelt in Normandy until one of them, most likely Gilbert's own father, came over to England in the first days of the Norman ascendency.

Becket's father, Gilbert, seems by the best accounts to have been a thriving London citizen, of good standing, fair character, and useful connexions. From his mother Matilda, whose exceeding piety was the theme of many popular fables in after days, her son Thomas may have derived that hasty vehemence and imaginative wildness of soul which, under different forms, blazed forth equally in the fighting chancellor and the cloistered exile of Pontigny. Removed at the age of ten from his mother's care, young Thomas passed his boyhood first among the monks of Merton, afterwards in London, where his hours were divided between attendance at the public schools and amusements more congenial to his active, unstudious nature. For hawking, hunting, and all manly exercises, he had a remarkable taste, in which the favour he won from the Norman gentlemen who frequented or lodged in his father's house, enabled him to indulge

to his heart's content. A few years later he went to Paris, then growing famous for its learning, to improve his French accent according to M. Thierry; to study, in our opinion, the civil and canon law. About the time he came of age his mother died. Troubles in his father's home drove him, it is said, for awhile into a counting-house, a move for which there may have been simpler reasons after all. Ere long, however, we find him a clerk in the household of Archbishop Theobald, under whose auspices he started on a career wherein his good fortune, his natural talents, his proud yet pleasing manners, his steady zeal for the interests of his master, and seeming care for those of the church, combined to raise him from one success to another, until at the early age of thirty-six, besides two prebends and many rich preferments, the new Archdeacon of Canterbury had come as chancellor of the young king, Henry II., to fill one of the highest offices in the realm.

During these years Becket seems to have renewed from time to time the studies he had begun at Paris, and to which he was afterwards to return with yet keener zest in the quiet precincts of Pontigny. From his journeys to Rome in the train, or on the business of his friend and patron, Archbishop Theobald, and from his attendance on the lectures of Gratian, the well-known teacher of Roman law, we may trace the growth of those high-flown maxims on priestly rule, in defence of which he

was one day to forfeit his sovereign's friendship, and eat the bread of affliction in a strange land. The *False Decretals*, those shameless forgeries of the ninth century from which successive Popes drew fit weapons for their most daring attacks on the secular power, had been but lately inwoven by Gratian himself into his text book of Civil Law; and of this poison-spring Becket must have drunk deeply during the year he sat under the greatest lawyer of his age.

Recommended by the aged primate to a monarch already mistrusted by the friends of an ambitious priesthood, the new chancellor was not long in securing the good graces of him whose head chaplain and general agent he had now officially become. Foolish flatterers began ere long to speak of him as the courtiers of a later monarch were wont to speak of the powerful but ill-starred Wolsey. His personal influence within certain limits was doubtless great. But his official importance, in days when the chancellor had no separate jurisdiction, has generally been over-rated, as much as the strong will and farseeing statesmanship of his royal master have been disallowed. As closet friend and boon comrade of a generous, open-hearted, impulsive prince, who threw himself into every pursuit of pleasure or business with a zeal and dash congenial to Becket's own, he was likely in some things to wield a spell more subtly potent than any of his fellow-councillors; but that he inspired as well as

promoted all the king's administrative reforms, or had nearly as much weight in the government as the chief justiciary and a few other great officers of state, we certainly do not believe. About this part of his career, indeed, there hangs a mystery which we cannot quite dispel. For which part of Henry's proceedings is Becket answerable: for the measures taken to restore peace, and improve the laws, or for the measures taken to enforce the obedience and narrow the immunities of the clergy? If he took so large a share in disarming barons and suppressing mercenaries, how was it that he never raised his voice against measures hurtful to those interests which his former patron had entrusted to his special care? We know that some of his friends did then and always reproach him with being in these days a persecuting Saul. The only excuse that others found for him lay in his weakness to brave the wrath of a wilful and strong-handed king. On the other hand, Henry's policy throughout his long reign seems to have been of one piece—one long effort to assert as king the strong arm of law against a turbulent peerage, and an encroaching priesthood. If that policy had begun with Becket, by what happy chance did his own mantle sit so well on the shoulders of his unknown successor? Our own belief is that Henry's chief justiciary, De Luci, had much more of his sovereign's ear than the courtly chancellor whom Henry admitted to a full share of his private pleasures, his sports, revels,

warlike enterprises, while keeping him at arm's length in all those matters of state with which as chancellor he had no especial concern.

Be the truth as it may, we cannot conceive of Becket, the chancellor, in the light of a virtuous Sully, guiding the counsels and sharing largely in the better deeds of an able but dissolute Henry of Navarre. Our fancy would rather follow him to the banquet hall, the hunting field, the meeting at Paris with the French king, the warlike camping ground over against Toulouse. In such scenes he figures well, and bears himself like a brave accomplished gentlemen, worthy to ride, fight, or feast, beside the best and highest in the land. Tall, stately, good-looking; with high, though perhaps narrow forehead, nose slightly aquiline, eyes large, clear, quick-glancing; wonderfully keen of sight, hearing, and smell; calm of manner, but lively and fluent of speech; in the noon of manly health and intellectual power, he stands out in perfect keeping with the gorgeous apparel, princely retinue, costly entertainments, and brilliant feats of arms, if not of so-called "gallantry," which blink from even modern eyes the memory of his priestly calling, and the slack discharge of its duties by perhaps the greatest pluralist of his own or any other age. His splendid habits eminently fitted him to lead to Paris an embassy whose magnificence amazed all beholders, and inspired the most glowing paragraphs that ever flowed from the pen of his faithful Fitz-Stephen.

His love of fighting found ample food in a war against the very monarch whom he had but lately visited as a friend. Once at the head of his armed knights and vassals, he cared little for his priestly office, or the means employed by his master for making the clergy pay towards the expenses of the war. Certain it is, that if Henry had felt as slight scruples as Becket did regarding the person of his liege lord, Louis VII. would only have left Toulouse a prisoner in the hands of his Norman vassal.

For seven years Henry showered his favours on the chancellor with no sparing hand. In addition to a fat deanery, he made him Warden of the Tower, lord of several castles, and lastly, tutor to his eldest son. Many of his proudest nobles sued for the honour of having their children also brought up in Becket's household, where they acquired all manly accomplishments, and so much of the milder graces as the influence of a courtly priest and his high-born companions in an age of universal rudeness could impart. How rude the manners of that age were, may be gathered from the accounts of contemporary writers, in which the finest gentlemen and the most lettered clerks appear to live as plainly, to speak as coarsely, to treat each other with as rough discourtesy, as only the roughest of English boors or the most reckless of backwoods settlers might do now. An uncomfortable splendour, a gross sort of plenty, are the general rule. Under the gorgeous apparel no clean white linen, nothing

but coarse wool, dirty from long wear, is to be found. The highest of the land are glad enough to drink beer only, and eat fat pork for many months together. Henry's couch of state is a mere mattress stuffed with hay or straw. The king himself swears worse than any trooper, and hurls hard names about him on the smallest provocation. Reverend bishops scold, jibe, and threaten each other like modern fishwives. Blows are as ready as words. Becket himself is equally prepared for either, and dies with a foul word upon his lips. Pious monks feed like pigs. Some of the guests who drop in at the chancellor's banquets have to sit upon the floor, which is strewn with rushes or green boughs, to save them from soiling their fine clothes. Henry himself, when the fancy takes him, rides into the hall, drinks to Becket, and rides out again; at another time jumps over the table and seats himself, sure of welcome, by his dear friend's side. The outward life of those days resembled the boisterous play of lusty young children. In a fight for precedence one archbishop plumps down on the lap of another; and in a more playful tussle for Becket's cloak, Henry and his friend nearly pull each other off their horses, amid the laughing of courtiers, and the wondering stare of the beggar to whom that cloak was eventually given.

All this while, if one might trust his biographers, the splendid chancellor not only retained a purity of morals, rare even among his fellow-priests, and

scarcely arguable from admitted facts; but also practised, from time to time, austerities which the most credulous of his courtly friends would never have dreamed of laying to his charge. Penances of every kind were undergone in the strictest privacy: his body was often bared to the lash: once a year he retired for three days to do secret acts of mercy in the neighbourhood of his old Merton friends. Even the hairshirt, which cut so striking a figure in after days, begins already to creep into view, like the conventional stage-ruffian stalking with elaborate secresy behind his future victim. In all such stories let him who listeth believe.

But days so happy for all who wished well to such a friendship, were soon to pass away like a dream. In 1161 died Becket's old friend, the mild and venerable primate, Theobald, with a parting prayer for his Master's heavenly guidance in the choice of a meet successor. Instead of seeking the Lord's gain, however, Henry sought his own, little dreaming of the payment he was to reap therefrom. Looking on Becket as a tried friend and zealous guardian of his royal rights; misled, whether by the warmth of his own regard, or by an imperfect acquaintance with the bends and shallows of his chancellor's mind; wishing also, we believe, to reward an able servant with fresh proofs of kingly gratitude, he coaxed or frightened the suffragan bishops, and the unwilling monks of Christchurch, into a measure not more fatal to his dearest hopes

and deep-laid schemes, than big with suffering and disgrace to the king himself, the primate, the barons, and the whole realm of England for many years to come. After some delay Becket stepped into his old patron's shoes, and the same miracle which, according to Bishop Foliot, turned a soldier and a layman into a priest, began therewith to turn two loving friends into life-long foes.

From the hour of his consecration by stern old Henry of Winchester, Becket became in heart and purpose what he had hitherto shown himself but in name—a priest of the "Holy Catholic Church." Henceforth his loyalty to his earthly sovereign must give way before what he deems his duty to God and his order. With what feelings he had watched the events preceding the election; whether he ever seriously warned the king against the step he was so bent on taking, or ever felt the least unwillingness to wear the mitre which other chancellors had worn before him, we will not pretend to divine: only of one thing we are pretty sure, that in these and other nice points of character the early biographers are entitled to no belief whatever. Henry was no fool; and thus far it was clear, that he had not the least inkling of a result which perhaps no one in all England, not even Becket himself, could have foregathered. Had either king or primate known what the end would be, it is not unlikely that Becket would have consented to lose his preferment rather than his friend, while Henry, for his

part, would never have given his friend the chance of turning round and attacking him with the fierceness of a deadly foe.

But it is idle speculating on what might have been. A change of feeling rather than character marks off this new stage in Becket's career. We have the same countenance showing henceforth a different side to the light. That dreamy mystic nature which the stir and turmoil of years had hitherto buried out of sight, now began to shake off its long thraldom, and, like the slaves let loose in Massinger's "Bondman," was soon wielding a sharper tyranny than that which had kept it down.

It is a curious fact, which even Mr. Robertson has failed to notice, that we never hear of Becket's dreaming or seeing visions, until he goes to Canterbury for his consecration. The busy active chancellor had slept soundly heretofore. But the change in his daily habits and pursuits wrought with the cares of his new position to darken the primate's waking hours, and people his broken slumbers with dreams and fancies which seemed prophetic to the easy faith of a superstitious age. His moral tone weakened by the slow poison of those canonical studies, by the loss of those secular pastimes which his health required, by the growth of dissensions hateful to his kindlier nature, Becket listened more and more eagerly to the whisperings of his distempered fancy, plunged deeper and deeper into the snares of a blind asceticism, and settled down at

last into a crazy fanatic, a hard irreverent bigot, who worshipped his own proud self under the guise of care for the interests of his order, and vented his zeal for God's service in deeds of fierce penance and fiercer broodings over imaginary wrongs.

All this, however, came by degrees. The new archbishop was neither a wilful hypocrite nor a new-born saint, but a proud, earnest, passionate, outspoken man. He neither suddenly dropped his layman's mask nor put on airs of deeper piety than one so charactered might naturally feel. He waxed more studious, more devout, fasted oftener, kept somewhat choicer company than before. He may have drunk water boiled with fennel: he certainly did not give up drinking wine. His temperance showed itself rather in spare than coarse living. The costly habits, the old taste for pomp and show, followed him into his new palace. The gorgeous apparel was not laid aside at once. The hall glittered as brightly as ever with its heaps of gold and silver plate; the guests that thronged it were at least as markworthy, and came as often as those of yore. His old munificence found a fresh channel in deeds of almsgiving, which outshone those of former primates as much as his secular greatness had outtopped that of former chancellors. His household was still large, but formed chiefly of clerks; he seemed still to prefer the friendship of men of varied learning and fine culture, to that of men renowned for piety alone. As judge in

an archiepiscopal court he discharged his trying duties with fearless purity and unfailing shrewdness. Among his officers the taking of bribes was sternly forbidden, and no sort of private influence availed the suitor who had wrong on his side. Ritual observances, severe and many, filled up nearly all the time left over from his official duties. Always by nature a zealot in whatever cause, he soon learned, we fancy, to feel a proud joy in rising at the dead of night to say his matins, and not returning to his pillow till he had washed the feet of thirteen beggars, and sent them off with full stomachs, with pockets better lined than before. Some holy or clerical book was always about his person, or read to him during meals. His afternoons were passed in prayer or reading, in visits to sick priests and poor, in quiet talk at home on points of discipline or canonical law. The floggings, too, were henceforth taken with punctual frequency; and, as if in atonement for all shortcomings, a shirt of sackcloth reaching to his knees, and carking his torn flesh with its life-long friction, must have brought continually before his mind the foolishness of all that seeming pomp and glory which drew on him the eyes and plaudits of unreasoning crowds.

The new phase of Becket's character soon began to show itself. While Henry was still in Normandy he received from his new primate a letter announcing his resignation of the chancellorship, whose duties

he avowed himself no longer justified in performing. Whatever his real motives for such a step, whether he had ceased to take further interest in worldly affairs, or deemed them likely to hinder his spiritual progress, or foresaw a clashing between the rival claims of his sovereign and his church, Becket had hereby lent a colour to the charges already thickening against him, and deliberately stricken a death-blow at the friendship which Henry had worked so hard, by so many acts of kindness, so many marks of the highest favour, to keep alive.

To the announcement of a step in those days so unusual, the king replied by requesting Becket to surrender the archdeaconry of Canterbury, which he had clearly no right to hold now. It was surrendered after many demurrings, which Mr. Sharon Turner ascribes to Becket's avarice, but which, to our thinking, flowed from his desire to keep out a future enemy of his own. This point yielded, others soon arose to ruffle Henry's mind anew. With a violence as lawless as it was unsanctioned, at least in spirit by the king, the archbishop turned some farmers out of holdings which had once belonged to his see. Other stories, some perhaps less true than irritating, found their way to Henry's ears. But Henry's wrath, if it blazed up fiercely one moment, would burn out the next; and he still refused, it seems, to think much evil of his old friend. The cordial greeting which Becket received that Christmas on his master's landing at Southampton,

betokened the return of that good-will which followed him a few months after to the council of Tours.

From this council, however, he came back to resume with fresh spirit his fight for priestly against civil power. Whatever tended to exalt the privileges or widen the material groundwork of the church, seemed to be wrongfully kept out of his devouring clutches. His principle of action was very plain. "Everything," says Mr. Robertson, "that had ever been given to the church was to be claimed, while nothing that had been parted with was to be abandoned." Homage was claimed from the Earl of Clare for a castle which his forefather had received from William the Conqueror. William of Eynesford was excommunicated for disputing Becket's right to present to a living of which William himself was the lawful patron. The king, as William's feudal lord, bade Becket recall an illegal sentence, and the primate yielded with so bad a grace, that Henry's wrath still smouldered. Fresh causes of disagreement kept widening the gulf between them. Whether the primate were right or wrong in any particular instance, his haughty airs and threatening speeches, the cool effrontery with which he mooted, and the reckless violence with which he strove to enforce the most untenable claims, were fast rousing against him the fierce hatred of many powerful opponents, and ever fanning into fresh flames the mistrust and anger already kindled in the breast of his quick though

kindly master. Ere long the late friends were to front each other as rival chieftains who brooked no equal and obeyed no superior, who hated each other with the bitterness that springs from broken friendship, and knew no rest from furious warfare save in the lulls of a hollow short-lived truce.

In many respects the combatants were fairly matched: both alike brave, haughty, passionate, deep-scheming, ready-handed, strong-willed. Henry's passion, fearful at first, was soon over; while that of Becket settled into a fit of sulky brooding. Both were men of quick parts, superior learning, powerful character; but Henry's intellect, polished with use, and kept sharp by frequent exercise, cut with ease through the clumsy sophistries brandished with such proud trustfulness by his more imaginative rival. Both had naturally warm hearts, and suffered many a pang at the melting away of their old friendship. Henry, too, would gladly have renewed again and again the ties which Becket, counting all things dross for the sake of a fancied duty, seems from the first to have cast off at once and for ever. The frank uprightness, once natural to both, had been modified somewhat in the one by his worldly experiences, more largely in the other by his special studies and the narrowness of his new-born zeal. To the fiery champion of Holy Church, lying, deceit, unfair charges, cunning wiles, seemed after all but venial sins, if inspired by devotion to a righteous cause. For Henry's crooked ways, on the other hand, we

have only the evidence of his natural foes, the clerical romancers of those days—evidence about as trustworthy as that whereon the conqueror of Cannæ stands forth in Livy's pages a monster of fraud and faithlessness. If the gusts of unbridled passion sometimes drove the king into deeds of cruel vengeance and stern injustice, his good sense soon called his nobler instincts back to their accustomed post, and helped them to repair, as far as might be, the hurts their brief abeyance had done his cause in the world's eye. But Becket's anger, kept alive by the strong yet steady breeze of a blinding remorseless mysticism, seemed gradually to burn away his better nature, to estrange the sympathies of his wiser friends, and almost neutralize the great advantages which his commanding station, his engaging qualities, his boldness in maintaining a popular cause against the leaders of a riotous oligarchy, and other reasons hardly less powerful, had combined to ensure him from the first. To put in force those monstrous theories of church rule which Gregory VII. had tried in vain on the iron-minded Conqueror, Becket scouted all ties of natural feeling, all claims of Christian love, meekness, long-suffering, self-denial, all suggestions of worldly wisdom and sober moderation. Not "peace on earth and good-will to men," but "pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis," was the keynote of his latter years. If during that chequered time Henry was sometimes cruel, vindictive, hard-hearted, the primate for his part was

seldom otherwise; showed himself indeed by far the worse Christian of the two. Both were strong-willed; but if Henry's purpose sometimes slept or went backwards, that of Becket never wavered one tittle: he saw nothing, cared for nothing, but the end he set himself to win. Scruples of conscience he may have had, but the grasping tyranny of his one idea soon crushed the rising weakness, and left him each time harder, less scrupulous, more self-contained than before. Both king and primate were proud, but the pride of Henry was to that of Becket as the pride of Plato to the greater pride of snarling Diogenes.

One influence there was, however, from which Henry had much to fear. He might be backed by the whole strength of his feudal following—by all the traditions alike of Norman and Saxon rulers, by all the wisdom of his ablest councillors, the agreement of scholars learned in the Canon and Civil Law—by every agency likely to work in favour of a sovereign not less wise than powerful among all the princes of his day. The Pope, Alexander III., was struggling against the anti-Pope set up by Frederic Barbarossa, and owed what influence he still had mainly to the wealth and energy of the English king. Of the English bishops some were openly on Henry's side, while few dared to act against him, in behalf of a movement less favourable to the rights of their national church than to the cause of Papal supremacy. The French king, indeed, was sure to

sympathize with a brother bigot, against a vassal whose dominions on the Continent were larger than his own; and the leading clergy in those dominions seem to have felt, some a personal, others a professional, regard for him who dared to oppose the son of the persecuting Geoffrey of Anjou. The crowd of idle clerks who swarmed throughout England, causing heavy scandal by their loose ways and virtual freedom from all fear of fitting punishment, were loud enough in praise, and frequent enough in prayer, for the victory of so stout a champion of their licence to do wrong. But of all such influences Henry took the very least account. His one great foe, and Becket's one fast friend, was that spirit of ignorant superstition, which, powerful among us even now, was sure in those childlike ages to wield a thraldom, against which no efforts of a few isolated master-minds could make much head. For ages had that spirit been wooed and moulded to his own purposes, by each successive guardian of the Roman Papacy. Trading in human weakness, the Romish priesthood had, step by step, builded up with the cement of human superstitions a spiritual empire founded in the depths of human ignorance. It was easy for men whom all Europe believed capable of turning a cake of flour at any moment into the very body and blood of God the Son, to lift their pretensions a step higher, and secure the general belief in their right to carry the keys of Heaven, to take precedence of earthly rulers, claim their vas-

salage, usurp their jurisdiction; the right to dethrone an unruly sovereign or grant away an independent kingdom in fief to its future conqueror. Against the sustaining spirit of such a system Henry struggled almost in vain.

"Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens;"

and the greatest monarch of his day was continually foiled and beaten by a monster whose cold shadow unnerved the arms of his stanchest followers.

A few months after Becket's return from Tours, the quarrel with his king burst into fiercer blaze than ever. By a course of steady encroachment, the ecclesiastical courts, to which the Conqueror had granted a separate jurisdiction for spiritual causes alone, had drawn away from the lawful judgement-seats all cases wherein the clergy had any shadow of a special interest. Only in these courts could a clerk be tried for murdering a layman, or a layman for murdering a clerk; and the worst penalties they could inflict had so little of a deterrent power, that the lower classes of clergy were fast becoming a byword for crimes of every shade. Any idle dissolute vagabond, who had once taken the clerical tonsure, was free to break any or all of the Ten Commandments for payment of a moderate fine, loss of his clerkly privileges, or the performance of a pilgrimage to some favoured shrine. Every crime had its moneyed worth, and the fines thus leviable had become not only the source of a handsome

revenue, but also the pretext for all kinds of petty extortion, and for many a deed of cruel outrage. Henry's anger had repeatedly been roused by instances of the scant justice which these courts would deal out to the worst offenders. During the few years of his reign, more than a hundred murders had been committed with impunity by clerks alone. Just after the death of Stephen, a case of unusual wickedness had been wrested away from young Henry's court, only to fall through some technical loophole in that of the bishops who tried it. Another priest, accused of murder, but acquitted by his bishop, had afterwards received what many thought too light a sentence for contempt of the King's Court, and violent abuse both of the king and his sheriff. And now the archbishop was putting forth the same old plea of priestly immunity, to shelter from the sterner and surer grasp of royal justice, a clerk who had added the murder of a parent to the seduction of that parent's child. He refused to yield up his prisoner—refused even to let him be seized by the king's officer, after he had been stripped of his priestly orders by a sentence of the bishop's court.

Henry's forbearance had now reached its bounds. The spiritual peers of the realm were summoned to meet him in council at Westminster. Having enlarged on his grievances, and specially denounced the principle of priestly immunity for breaches of the temporal law, he called on his hearers to aid him

in preserving the laws and customs of his royal grandfather. With one exception they promised severally to obey him—"saving their order." The king dismissed them in loud wrath. The primate was straightway ordered to give back his castles of Eye and Berkhampstead, which he had not yet found it unlawful to retain. He himself was summoned to a private meeting at Northampton, out of which his old friend got nothing but cold disclaimers of any hostile purpose, and a sullen reiteration of his Westminster reply. Meanwhile the recusant prelates were fast yielding, one by one, to the threats or persuasions of their opponents. At last even Becket was coaxed, by the hourly pressure of his own friends and trustiest counsellors, to promise an unqualified observance of the ancient customs. To make the assent as public as the refusal, Henry summoned a council of all his peers, lay and spiritual, to his palace of Clarendon, near Salisbury. Here, after many shifts and turnings which betokened the soreness of his inward struggles, Becket solemnly and openly swore, *on the word of a priest*, to keep "loyally and with good faith" the laws and customs of the realm, as read out in the hearing of all there by an officer of the royal household. According to Fitz-Stephen, the oath was further ratified by the setting of his seal to a true copy of the hateful instrument. Whether he sealed or no, it is quite clear, in spite of Mr. Morris, that Becket's troth was deliberately given to a set of customs, plainly defined

in a document, of which every word was audible to the assembled barons, who had confirmed it by their own votes; and that in heart—if not, as some declared, in very words—he submitted to incur the guilt of perjury, with a view "to repent hereafter as he might."

That a lie so publicly and wilfully spoken must have sat rather heavily on the primate's conscience, we may readily believe. Some of his time-serving brethren found a balm for their dishonesty in mental reservations, quite consonant with the low morality taught and practised by the shining lights of the mediæval church. To break the faith of the most solemn treaties, to cheat the enemies of the church by every kind of bold falsehood and cunning meanness, to undo the effect of the most binding ordinances between man and man, between king and subject, priest and layman, were among the standing orders of the Italian clerisy; and the taint of their wickedness had already fastened on the purer morality of the old Teutonic races. But Becket's conscience, less hard, or at least more whimsical than that of many who had sinned more readily with far less excuse, seems to have left him no peace until he had found full absolution from the Holy Father for all words and deeds contrary to the interests of his order.

The remorse he suffered for acts of weakness, inspired partly by a certain tenderness for those whom his obstinacy might have compromised, must

have been tenfold embittered by the heavy blow his self-conceit had also undergone. To a man so proud by nature and position, the greatest punishment of all must have been the knowledge of his complete discomfiture before those over whom he had lately reared so haughty a crest. In that great council there were few who pitied, many who loudly exulted over his fall. Henry and his party had gained a conspicuous triumph not only over God's chosen ministers, but over himself, their vauntful champion as well. At the very first trial of strength he found himself, as it were, disgracefully routed, and his whole kingdom prostrate at the feet of a mighty conqueror. In a paltry quarrel about the punishment of a worthless criminal, he had staked everything—the rights of his order, his own fair fame and personal influence, the high position claimed for his church, as guardian of the public morals and reformer of many social wrongs; and the result had left him thoroughly disgraced even in his own eyes, and conscious of having dragged down into a common ruin all those interests which he had deemed himself so resolute and powerful to defend. By one false move he had thrown the game into his adversary's hands, and Henry had promptly turned to the best account an opening for which he had long been waiting, and might still have waited in vain.

And yet the quarrel had seemed far from paltry to Becket's eyes. Too blind a zealot to yield one

tittle of his fancied rights, he opposed, on principle, a demand whose widest issues Henry himself could hardly have foreseen. As usual, the great event sprang from a seemingly trivial cause, and began to shape itself in the formal assertion of principles hitherto overlooked, or only partially allowed. Henceforth, whatever a proud Pope or a weak government might do to render them, for the nonce, an idle letter, the Constitutions of Clarendon virtually became law, and were enforced more and more triumphantly in the reigns of the later Plantagenets. In them were published to the world the will and purpose of Henry's government, as confirmed by the almost unanimous vote of the great national council, to check the insolent encroachments of a ravening clerisy, strong in party feeling, wealth, and landed influence—to thwart the worrying interference of a foreign priest in the affairs of a powerful kingdom—to put down that rule within rule which the troubles of Stephen's reign had nursed into a fearful nuisance—to enforce, indeed, on all classes of Englishmen a uniform allegiance to one paramount law. Founded on customs already existing, on laws which had never been lawfully repealed, this famous document seems to have met with no straightforward denials of its claim to be accepted as a revised edition of half-forgotten truths. In all likelihood it was really what it professed to be; but even had it been quite the reverse, Becket, at least, would have scorned to question it on its legal side. To him, and those

who thought with him, it mattered little whether the right of appealing from the bishop to the king, the liability of priests to punishment by secular courts, the duty of obtaining the king's consent to the excommunication of one of his chief tenants, his claim to a voice in the election of bishops, the equality of lay and spiritual peers, in respect not only of feudal privileges, but also of feudal burthens, were merely hateful old doctrines proclaimed anew, or impious innovations on a better system. It never occurred to the wrathful primate to appeal from Henry II. to William the Conqueror, or from the usages of Henry I. to those of Stephen. William's separation of one court into two was clearly an attempt to define the separate duties of lay and clerical judges; while, in those days of glimmering law and cobweb morality, the concessions forced from a weak usurper could hardly have been held to bind the rightful heir.

As if to cut away the last inch of ground from under M. Thierry's Saxon castle—that airiest of all those airy fabrics which modern writers have builded up on the blank spaces of olden story—one of the few passable "customs" struck hard at a practice which any Saxon priest fighting for his country's outraged freedom, would surely have defended with his last breath. It ordained that no serf should thenceforth receive the tonsure without the sanction of his liege lord. This was a wise and just precaution against a wide-spread mischief, fostered by the eagerness of successive bishops to swell the

ranks of their own subjects, no matter at what cost to the general weal. As every clerk became at once a freeman, each new addition to the lower ranks of an overgrown and turbulent priesthood added also another name to the list of likely adherents to the first outspoken champion of popular rights. According to the French historian such a champion was Becket himself, and yet the very enactment which such a champion would have deemed the most fatal to his dearest hopes was the one which Becket himself passed over with the smallest concern.

To paint the countryman of Archbishop Theobald, the splendid chancellor of a Norman king, the haughty leader of a Norman prelacy, as a Saxon patriot eaten up with zeal for his bleeding fatherland, seems to us an unprovoked departure from the plain truth of Becket's story. Patriotism could have had no place in a heart engrossed by the blindest devotion to a cause which demanded the surrender of all mere earthly ties, the daily sacrifice of all earthly feelings. With Becket the priest had now become all in all. As in the case of Bernard and Hildebrand, all his conceptions, energies, desires, had shaped themselves into a living embodiment of that proudly aggressive spirit which marked for centuries the progress of the Papal power. Under the guise of zeal for the Church of Christ, his self-love became ennobled into a glorious advocacy of priestly rights, his proud ambition soared far beyond the limits of a merely

moral regard for the rights and privileges of an everyday world. His fiery imagination led him to realize more vividly than most men those large schemes of world-wide sway, which, however dear to fanatics of every creed, have come to twine themselves with peculiar meaning round every deed and doctrine of Papal Rome. He himself did no more than the meeker Theobald would, if he dared, have also done; no more than the pious Anselm had also tried to do. He only reflected the bolder workings of a policy whose weaker side displayed itself in the shifting tendencies of Pope Alexander III., and later still, in the feeble remonstrances and feebler ravings of Pius IX. His boldest pleadings against Henry's claim to the homage of his bishops could not have been clinched with stronger language, than that wherein the Council of Bari had already denounced the same practice, declaring it "execrable that pure hands, which could create God and offer Him up as a sacrifice for mankind, should be put between profane hands inured to rapine and bloodshed, and defiled by all manner of unclean pursuits." His sublimest insolence fell short of Pope Pascal's strange misreading of a Scripture text, when Henry I. was scolded for daring to create his God by granting the feudal investiture to a bishop of his own realm. His conception of the spirit in which a Christian prelate should enforce his rule against all opponents was not more unchristian than that of the austere and saintly Bernard, who scorn-

fully exclaimed, on the election of Pope Eugenius III., "Is this a man to gird on the sword and to execute vengeance on the people, to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with links of iron?" Nor, in the crookedness of his dealings with the world of outside laymen, did Becket rise to the transcendent wickedness of the Pontiff, who, after breaking the host with his Imperial foe in token of a peace yet further ratified by the most awful curses against whoever should first break it, had scarcely lost from his mouth the taste of the holy wafer, before he deliberately ate his words and launched fresh excommunications at the Imperial head. Perhaps, in the general line of his fanaticism, in the thoroughness of his self-deception, the loftiness of his Church theory, and the boldness of his efforts to work it out, in his haughty courage, his reckless stubbornness, his fierce resentment against all who thwarted him, his natural preference for strong measures, the English primate most nearly resembled that master-pope of the preceding century, whose whole reign was one daring assault on the princes of the earth; whose soaring assumptions paved a way for the encroachments of yet more fortunate successors; whose chequered nature, fitly illustrated by his chequered career, served to render him at once the glory and the shame of the Latin Papacy.

But if Becket was all priest, Henry was every inch a king. The land was to be ruled in peace, his

people's rights were to be firmly upheld, the laws administered with stern justice, but only in the name and under the special sanctions of the king himself. He at least would be master of his own house. His strong hand had put down the disorders which spread so fearfully during the last reign. The barons had been shorn of many privileges fatal to the cause of peace and the paramount rights of the crown. And if the clergy, too, had encroached on the royal power, were they alone to be exempted from his evenhanded reforms? While always ready to grant the Pope his spiritual headship, to use him as a tool against others, to fill his treasury with occasional Peter-pence, he had no notion of letting him or his agents tamper with any part of his kingly dues, or usurp the functions of a secular magistrate to the overthrow of that justice which he, the chief magistrate, had sworn to render. What England owes to her Norman kings and barons, is seldom taken into account in this age of general sciolism and funny literature, of popular histories glorifying the greatness of the middle, and of foolish statesmen truckling to the ignorant clamours of the lower classes. And yet it was a Norman king who established the right of trial by jury—a Norman king who commuted personal service in the field for a fair scutage—a Norman king who taxed nobles and commons alike, who struck the hardest blows at the tyranny of feudal lords over their vassals. It was a Norman king who gave England her judicial cir-

cuits—a Norman baron who summoned the first English House of Commons—a body of Norman barons who forced the signing of the great Charter. Nothing but the steady boldness of our Norman kings and nobles enabled England to hold her own against the restless encroachments of a powerful priesthood and a cormorant Papacy. It was indeed an ill day for Rome when Duke William set foot on these shores. But for that infusion of Norse fire into our Saxon nature England might have been blessed with a race of princes as priest-ridden as Edward the Confessor, as powerless against the Church as King Edwy. But William and his successors were kings of quite another stamp. Hildebrand might threaten the French, and excommunicate the German sovereign, might rob Poland of her king and her kingly crown, might claim lordship over every country in Europe; but his demand for homage and Peter-pence from England was met by the bold Conqueror with a stern refusal of the one and a scornful present of the other. He forbade his bishops to attend a council summoned by the Pope, and his stout example was followed even by the more embarrassed Stephen. Appeals to Rome were sternly forbidden by the first three Norman kings. Anselm's first quarrel with William II. arose from his having dared to proclaim the new Pope without his master's royal leave. Henry I. had braved an interdict rather than yield his right to receive homage for the temporalities of a bishop's see. Nor would

he allow a Papal legate to be received as such within his realms. And in the same sturdy spirit did Henry II. confront the insolence of his new primate, and scotch, if he could not quell, the many-headed bugbear which he had unwittingly roused from slumber. Against men like these Papal ambition had to fight every inch of its way; the gain of one moment nearly balanced by a loss the next. Inspired by their bold example, the barons of a later reign rose against the coward who stooped to resign his crown and kingdom into the hands of a Papal legate. Other kings of the same dynasty carried on the fight with more marked success: other barons stood forth to shield the first great English Reformer from the violence of angry monks and prelates armed with special orders for his extinction. If we are proud of our Saxon birthright, let us at least be fair to those "Norman robbers," who, like the Danes before them, strengthened the race of Alfred and Athelstan with offshoots from that same parent stock which had peopled for unknown ages the shores of the Baltic and German Seas.

But we must return to Becket himself. After receiving the absolution which enabled him to resume his spiritual functions, he seemed to go on his old way, in utter disregard of the Customs which he had just helped to make law. Declined an interview with the king, whose wrath was again burning, he twice sailed from England without leave, and was twice baffled by stress of weather. Going once

more to the king, he was received at Woodstock with a smiling query about the smallness of one kingdom to hold them both, and with a polite request to stay at home and mind his duties for the future. He stayed at home and minded his duties in such a way, that his angry master was driven into measures less fair and wise than outwardly illegal, for bringing so hopeless a recusant upon his knees. But upon his knees the archbishop would not be brought. He refused to hear the sentence decreed against him by the Council of Northampton —forbade the bishops to sit in judgment on their chief—abused his enemies and seeming well-wishers in the roughest terms—openly recanted all that he had sworn at Clarendon—threatened the wise old Earl of Leicester with his curse, and left the court as proudly as he had entered it, declaring that he had appealed to Rome, and only from the Pope himself would he take his award. Jeered and jeering he stalked out into the open air, where the mob received him with loud cheers. For all his contumacy Henry let him go free, and issued strict orders that none should do him the least harm.

Harm however he feared, or feigned to fear. Flying secretly from Northampton to Sandwich, he crossed the Channel in a small boat, which carried him safe, but sea-sick, to Gravelines. Herbert of Bosham, forgetting the sea-sickness, describes the sea as made calm for his master's special behoof; while Henry's messengers, starting at the selfsame

hour from Dover, were tossed about in a fearful storm. From Gravelines the small band of exiles made their way with much precaution, and not a few adventures, to the friendly neighbourhood of St. Omer. Now trudging wearily on foot, thankful for the gift of a dirty old stick from a pitying housewife; anon mounted on a sorry jade, without a saddle, with only a straw rope for reins; stopping to rest at the meanest hostelries, and forced to travel in the cold November nights, the self-banished primate must have smiled grimly at the plight to which fortune had reduced the redoubted warrior of other days—the friend and counsellor of rival sovereigns—the splendid leader of that gorgeous embassy which had set all Paris aroar with wonder only a few years before.

Meanwhile, Henry's envoys having fared ill with the French king, proceeded to lay their grievances and requests before Pope Alexander at Sens, whither the archbishop too was wending his way. Unluckily for Henry, the Pope, so lately an exile from Rome, had just begun to walk without further help from his old patron. Little as he approved of Becket's headstrong violence, he had still less desire to see him beaten in any effort to maintain the rights, or even to push forward the landmarks, of the Holy See. So the king's envoys were dismissed with lectures and vague assurances, while Becket himself was received with open arms and much outward courtesy by the cardinals whom Alexander

sent out to do him honour. The meeting at Sens, indeed, was far more friendly than some of those present liked to see. A mild rebuke for having ever agreed to the hateful Customs, was washed away in a warm approval of Becket's most contumacious acts; and when he made a show of resigning his see into the Papal hands, Alexander, in the teeth of opposing murmurs, declined to accept so fair an opening for the settlement of so unwelcome a dispute. A few days after, with the Pope's leave, and many farewell promises of future aid, the primate betook himself to the Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny, not far from Sens.

Provoked at the failure of his appeal, and furious with Becket for further thwarting him, Henry himself took swift and summary measures of revenge against the runaway—of precaution against the Pope. He confiscated, as he had every right to do, the property of his contumacious subject, and sequestered the revenues of his see. After the cruel fashion of those days, he decreed the banishment of Becket's kindred, friends, and followers—binding them by an oath, no sooner made than broken, to appear in person before the unwilling cause of their misfortune. He made his bishops swear, under awful penalties, neither to quit the realm without leave, nor to send a private appeal to the Pope, on any grounds whatever. All correspondence with the exiles was sternly forbidden—the Peter-pence were gathered into the royal treasury—a close watch was kept on all the ports—and,

to make assurance doubly sure, an appeal, subscribed by all the bishops of Henry's party, was presently lodged at Rome, in arrest of all proceedings that might be attempted on the other side.

With the monks of Pontigny the exile stayed nearly two years—wasting his delicate body with sharp penances, and eating his heart away with perpetual brooding over wrongs created or enhanced by his morbid fancy; with studies which only led him deeper and deeper into the slough of a blinding fetishism. His absorbing fondness for the works and company of canonists and schoolmen, drew down on him the frequent reproof of his truest and wisest friend—the scholarly, high-minded John of Salisbury. His plain dress and spare diet contrasted strangely with the rich profusion of his table, and the stately retinue he was still able to keep about him. Loud groans and sleepless nights attested the sharpness of penances which his lying biographers took needless pains to multiply. A long illness, haunted with horrid dreams, forced him to exchange his beans and water for a moderate supply of daintier food. In that lonely retreat his restless nature, shut off from healthier amusements, found a perilous relief in idle harpings on the past, and idler dreams of the future—in querulous letters to his friends, or furious letters to his foes—in visions of his own end, and strange omens of fearful revenge on sinners worse than Doeg or Ahitophel, than Judas or Barabbas. One

set of parallels would naturally start another; and Becket, in the height of his savage self-complacency, took unwearied delight in comparing his own sufferings to those of David, of Paul, of Stephen—even of the crucified Saviour himself. By long brooding over his troubles, the proud, pugnacious, vindictive priest had really come to identify an unscrupulous zeal for the cause of a godless Papacy and a lawless priesthood, with a pure unearthly devotion to that new religion of love and self-sacrifice, which men of his nature have always done so much to travesty and disgrace.

In the spring of 1165 Alexander left Sens for his own capital, which he entered a few months later, after an absence of several years. About the same time Henry began to flirt with the prelates of the German schism, and made advances towards a close alliance with the great Emperor Frederic Barbarossa. Could these two princes, rivals in power and ability, but drawn together by so many points of mutual sympathy, have managed to join hands against their common foe, the tide of priestly dominion might have been surmounted then and there. But that union was not to be. What steps were taken towards it, however, were enough to frighten the Pope into delaying the fulfilment of Becket's plans. His own prospects still lowered, he and his cardinals missed the well-known touch of Henry's gold: Becket must therefore be tied up from further movements for another year. But the year went

round, and, by the Easter of 1166, Becket was free to act as Papal Legate for the province of Canterbury. To avert the new danger Henry, with the advice of his assembled lords and prelates, drew up a fresh appeal, which his envoys, in the wilful absence of Becket himself, read aloud before the monks of Pontigny.

Still the Primate would not be quite baulked of his prey. At Vézelay, where Bernard had preached the second Crusade, and torn up his own garments to meet the clamorous demand for more badges, he thundered his curses against John of Oxford, one of his most active opponents, Richard de Luci the Chief Justiciary, and others, who had aided Henry in trampling on the rights or invading the domains of Holy Church. Henry himself, being then ill, was publicly warned to repent or take the consequences. Curses were uttered against any who still upheld the Constitutions of Clarendon, and the English bishops were formally absolved from all allegiance thereunto. These bold proceedings fell like a thunder-clap on the ears of even those near companions who had ridden with Becket from Pontigny. His enemies were soon made aware of the fate designed for them. Letters of cursing, command, exhortation, were delivered by unknown hands to the persons whose address they bore. Bishop Foliot himself was summoned to meet the new legate at Pontigny. But the bishop, after his first surprise, soon learned to treat the summons as

lightly as others treated Becket's command to shun all intercourse with their excommunicate friends. A joint appeal to Rome from himself and most of his brother prelates secured their party another year's reprieve from the worse results of their disobedience to the Pope's own vicegerent.

Henry himself adopted sterner measures. Threatening letters reached Pontigny, and Becket, taking the hints conveyed him in the long faces and awkward speeches of his well-meaning friends, withdrew to a monastery near Sens, where, under the shelter of a more powerful patron, he awaited the next phase of a struggle which had still some years to run. For his harshness on this and other occasions Henry has been unfairly arraigned by the thoroughgoing partisans of Becket or his cause. They seem to have forgotten what even Herbert of Bosham is fain to allow, that Henry believed himself to have quite as good grounds for assailing the priestly power as Becket had for defending it; that Henry was quite as justified in punishing what his ablest counsellors deemed acts of wilful treason, as Becket could possibly be in setting at nought those human laws which, to his own thinking, seemed utterly at variance with the higher laws of God. The king, in truth, was only using against a rebellious outlaw the weapons which a wrathful prelate was always ready enough to use against an offending layman. Between the cruelty of his worst acts of spiteful fury and the cruelty of a sentence of excom-

munication, such as Becket repeatedly pronounced on the faintest pretext, the choice, if any, lies in favour of the king. Becket's conduct throughout the long quarrel would have provoked a saint, much more a man endowed with the failings, as well as the good points, of a noble nature. If Henry was cruel by impulse, his adversary could be more cruel of set purpose, under the promptings of a hard fanaticism, untempered by Henry's redeeming virtue—his readiness to forgive.

Meanwhile, John of Oxford was pushing his master's cause at Rome with the success that usually attends a full purse and a ready tongue. It was not the first time by many that an earthly prince had triumphantly played on the vices, the selfish aims, the worldly needs of those who claimed the heaven-descended right of showing all sinners the way of salvation. Like the vulture swooping for carrion down to the lowermost valleys, Papal ambition could dive, as well as soar, beyond the limits of less spiritual clay. When John of Salisbury describes one of the Papal envoys as "a man of good repute, yet a Roman and a cardinal," he hints at a depth of infamy which very few men of English birth and training could hope to reach. This envoy was one of the two now sent from Rome with full powers to hear the case on either side. Against them both Becket protested, now scolding the Pope for his seeming desertion of the right, anon ignoring the powers entrusted to the mediating cardinals.

He hurled fresh excommunications about him. He would listen to no plan for transferring himself to another see. When Alexander, once more driven from Rome, again returned to it after Frederic's hasty retreat from a devouring plague, Becket spurred him on to bolder measures, for which "God's judgment on the new Sennacherib had clearly opened a way." In his wrong-headed distrust of all who differed from him, he even charges William of Pavia with thirsting for his blood, a figure of speech peculiarly grateful to his wounded self-esteem.

Of course the quarrel still raged. While Henry, for his part, was ready to yield all that became a king, Becket was determined to yield nothing, even though his stubbornness began to lose him friend after friend. At length, in the spring of 1169, a conference was held at Montmirail, between Henry and his new friend Louis of France. Becket and a fresh batch of Papal commissioners were also there. The exile fell on his knees before his old master. Henry raised him up with the old loving smile, and words of true kindness on his lips. Confessing his follies and bewailing their result, Becket wound up his broken speech by throwing himself on Henry's mercy,—"*saving the honour of God.*" By that one clause, "omnis effusus labor." Henry turned away with a furious oath and a passionate appeal to Louis against such a piece of headstrong folly. Becket's followers had listened all with wonder,

many with disgust, to the strange ending of his treacherous speech, to the old reservation renewed in other words, in words meaning much more than now meets the ear. In vain did Henry again offer terms fair enough to satisfy the French king, the commissioners, the nobles and leading men on either side. In vain did Becket's chief friend, the Bishop of Poitiers, warn him not to carry his resistance too far: in vain did nearly all present raise their voices in remonstrance or fierce reproach. Becket would not yield an inch, and when the meeting broke up in sullen discourtesy, the jeers of his very clerks attended their ungracious master on his homeward way.

Still the quarrel raged, and still the Pope kept trimming between the combatants. Henry, with other things to mind, stood mainly on the defensive, while Becket, once more reconciled to Louis, attacked his foes with fresh curses and ever loudening volleys of hysterical Billingsgate. A fresh commission, backed by the counsels of Becket's former ally, the wise and honoured Archbishop of Rouen, failed to heal the wound which Becket at least, on one plea or another, seemed bent on keeping open. At last a fourth commission met with seeming success. On July 22nd, 1170, Henry and his primate met together once more like dear friends between whom an estrangement of six years' standing had never taken place. Riding away from the rest, they talked long together in the old

familiar fashion: for the time perhaps they really loved each other with all the trusting warmth of earlier days. Promises were freely interchanged, and they parted with every token of mutual good-will.

But this bright morning was too soon overcast. Becket might seem to renew his olden friendship, but he could not easily lay aside those meaner habits which had now become to him a second nature. Years of spiritual distress and worldly trial had brought him to nearly as sad a pass as the crazy fanatic in "Old Mortality." Because Henry's orders were not punctually obeyed, because his own adherents could not at once regain their forfeit property, because his own messengers were not received in England with open arms, because the prelates who crowned Prince Henry had not asked his leave at first or his pardon afterwards, Becket spoke of himself as one betrayed, whom all men conspired to persecute; whose doom was already sealed in the hearts of enemies thirsting for his blood, as the Jews of old had thirsted for that of the world's Redeemer. The Papal censures which were only to be used in the last need, he hurled with ready spite at all who had officiated in young Prince Henry's coronation. His old enemies were cursed again in the old forms. Henry himself he worried out of nearly all his patience with paltry complaints, with words of wild misgiving, with signs of extreme reluctance to leave his French retreat. At last, after many delays and much idle grumbling, he sailed for

England in company with John of Oxford, whose presence, however hateful to Becket himself, was doubtless meant to insure him a safe passage to his future home.

Had he returned in the spirit of a humble Christian, all might yet have been well. Many a weaker man in his place would have been too proud to vent his spleen on the smaller curs who yelped in unison with the deep growls of their noble leader. Henry himself, once sure of his rival's friendship, scorned to retain a grudge against that rival's followers. He at least had never thought of fondling his meaner passions into the hallowed tools of a murderous zeal for God's service. It was left for a saint of the mediæval church to illustrate her teaching by a show of malignity as hateful to the generous instincts, as a shirt of sackcloth overrun with vermin is loathsome to the cleanly culture of an average man. Instead of quietly resuming his pastoral duties, and awaiting like a man the issue of a dignified appeal against those who still withheld the property or denied the homage due to his see, he carried his staff like a fighter's bludgeon, retorted threats with threats, outrage with outrage, raised new enemies on every side, did everything in short that man could do to invite the blow which ere long stretched him lifeless on the floor of Canterbury cathedral. He had reentered England as a conqueror only to be struck down like a dog. He died as he had lived, the curse and the prayer mounting together from his lips.

That such a life and such a death should have entitled Becket to the rank of saint and martyr, is a standing witness to the frightful confusion of right with wrong, of Christian virtues with unchristian vices, which any system founded on mere fanaticism, especially religious fanaticism, is sure to bring about in time. And yet this man, the victim of his own passions rather than Henry's hasty words, was canonised by the church of his own day, and became the most popular of English idols for more than three centuries; and for his sake the great king of England was ere long bruising his naked feet over the rough road to Canterbury cathedral, and baring his back for the blows of monks and prelates once foremost in denouncing his murdered rival. And under the shadow of his name another Pope was soon to cap the triumph thus gained over the England of Henry of Anjou by yet more disgraceful triumphs over the England of his despicable son. And for many a year that church for whose liberties Henry had really fought, was to be trodden under foot by successive Popes, and overrun by a swarm of foreign priests who battened on her princely revenues, and did their worst to tighten the thraldom of which their own presence was the most damning mark. Luckily for England, her future primates were not all of Becket's stamp; her statesmen never quite forgot the teaching of such men as Richard de Luci; nor was Henry II. fated to be the last great prince of the Norman line.

FREDERIC II. OF GERMANY.

Not long ago an angry Frenchman assured his readers that Rome belongs not to the Romans, but to Christ only. "I attest it; God is here—here only may He dwell; and if He allow himself to be driven hence, He may consent to pass away, but not to settle down elsewhere." This wild shriek of Ultramontane blasphemy is but the newest version, the fittest sequel, of that never ending outcry with which the Popes of Rome and their thoroughpaced champions have startled the centuries and overawed the nations, ever since Charlemagne allowed a Roman bishop to crown him Emperor of the West.

In one form of words or another the same burst of blasphemy keeps always ringing on the attentive ear. From the mouth of every priest, who sought by any means, however wrongful, to enlarge the power of the Roman Papacy, there went forth the same virtual declaration of a God who governed the world from his chosen dwelling-place, the Chair where sat his own incarnate likeness, the Pope of

Rome. The cry which to modern Englishmen sounds so like an absurd anachronism—a pardonable howl of wholly powerless rage—had a meaning, neither absurd nor impious, for the king who bared his shoulders to the scourge in honour of the murdered Becket; a meaning so terrible in the eyes of whole nations, that one of Germany's proudest Kaisers humbled himself before it, as no man living would now stoop to do; while another, greatest of them all, was dogged for the best years of his life by a curse which turned his happiness to gall; robbing his best achievements of their natural fruit, shrouding his fair fame in a heap of unworthy slanders, and wringing his heart with the woes of faithful friends, the estrangement of old allies, and the ceaseless plottings of foes ungrateful or unforgiving. If even now there be men and princes who turn pale at the thunders of the Vatican—if even a strong French ruler still fears to appeal from the head of a dying Papacy to the good sense and justice of his own countrymen, we may imagine how tough a battle the high-minded grandson of Frederic Barbarossa had to wage with a power so lusty, palpable, and far-darting as that which Pope Innocent III. had bequeathed to the hands of his likeminded successors, Gregory IX. and Innocent IV.

From the 11th to the 13th century the power of the Roman Papacy spread more and more fatal spells over the hearts and liberties of men. The rod of Aaron swallowed up all the other rods. Beginning

with the overthrow of all religious freedom under Hildebrand, the Church of Rome had come, under the more fortunate Innocent III., to declare itself the sole fountain of civil rights and national well-being to every state in Europe. Starting from the one absolute dogma, that the Bishop of Rome was God's vicegerent on earth, a dogma established after several centuries of loud-mouthed assertion, by dint of a long series of plots, violences, threats, and deliberate frauds, Hildebrand set himself to strengthen and enlarge, by a few daring strokes, the fabric which his predecessors of the 10th century had been building stone by stone. One after another the European Churches acknowledged him as their rightful head, to whom all priests and bishops owed their power—to whom, and not to any layman, they were bound to do homage for their earthly honours and goods. Hitherto the German Emperors had put their own favourites into the chair of St. Peter: henceforth the Popes of Rome should be chosen by the cardinals only. The kings of the earth had hitherto dared with bloody hands to invest the rulers of the priesthood with the symbols of their holy sway: henceforth he declared that only the Pope himself could place the ring and crosier in the hands of men entrusted with the power "of creating God." The better to enforce the allegiance of his order to their one rightful lord, he cut them off from human ties and sympathies, by denouncing as a sin for priests that state of wedlock which the laity were taught to

honour as a sacrament. His mad ambition stopped short of no extravagance, his fierce fanaticism shrank from no wickedness, which might help the cause of the Papacy against the world and the world's freedom. Already had the spirit of Jesuitry grown old in Rome, centuries before its outward birth in Loyola. Because a high-spirited German Emperor declined to accept his views of Papal Supremacy over all human law, this chosen Vicar of God, this guardian of a gospel of peace and love hunted his enemy with all the inventive malice of a vulgar fiend, with all the blood-thirsty violence of a vulgar murderer. Deeds for which mere laymen would be held accursed, were done or sanctioned with an unctuous joy by him who, even in dying, dared to hold himself up to the world as a martyr to his love of righteousness and his hatred of iniquity. He who sets himself above everything human, soon comes to outrage Divine laws. The proud High-Priest who strove to assert the rights and mend the morals of his clergy, thought it no shame to harass Germany with a furious civil war—to set Henry's Barons free from their oath of fealty—and to brand the Emperor himself as a God-forsaken outlaw, whom any one passing by might slay with impunity.

Hildebrand died in exile, but the fruits of his policy survived him. If his successors, weaker or more reasonable than himself, were ever inclined to lower their outward tone, there stood behind them men like Bernard of Clairvaux, whose strong words

and bold example kept up their nominal leaders to the mark already attained. It took many years to establish celibacy among the priesthood. Anselm and Becket carried on a losing game against the manly statesmanship of Henry Beauclerk and his wise grandson. Henry V. of Germany obliged Pope Pascal II. to renounce all claim to the investiture of Henry's bishops. When the legate of Adrian IV. tried the Hildebrand process upon Frederic Barbarossa, the Emperor requited him, after Hildebrand's fashion, by getting up a schism in the Papacy. But little by little the Papal policy won its way. As the constant dropping of water wears away the hardest stone, so would the bravest princes of Christendom be worried or wearied into surrendering some part of their rights and liberties in favour of a power which only waxed hungrier the more it got. What chance had they of holding their ground against an enemy who never rested—who assailed them with a hundred different weapons—who regarded neither the value of an oath, nor the claims of friendship, nor the ties of family, nor the duties of the subject, nor the peace of nations when such things stood in his way? Year by year, the road which Hildebrand's daring had once marked out dimly for his fellow-churchmen, seemed, as it were, to be trodden ever smoother and broader by the feet of many adventurers, each going a little further than the last. What was once the dream of the few, became in due time the acknowledged purpose of a whole

priesthood; and one after another of the rights and liberties most dear to modern statesmen, fell under the blasphemous incantations of a class whose power for evil was increased ten-fold by the awe they naturally inspired in the hearts of a rude and superstitious people. Even in the frenzied rush of so many myriads eastward, to rescue the Holy City from the turbaned followers of Mahound, the popes and the clergy saw new ways of strengthening their hold on the minds and the worldly treasures of their credulous flocks. When people began to tire of slaying Saracens, their wily pastors found new outlets for their warmth of blood and piety in a crusade against heretics of their own race and creed.

The glory of this latter invention belongs to Pope Innocent III., otherwise known as one of the mildest pontiffs of the Hildebrand school. In this Pope culminated the greatness of the Roman Papacy. Proud as Hildebrand himself, but luckier in his generation, he encountered few of the hindrances which had sometimes checked Rome's onward march to empire, even under leadership far bolder and more unscrupulous than his own. By setting up Otho of Brunswick, as a rival emperor to the nephew of the great Barbarossa, he gratified his instinctive hatred of the bold house of Hohenstaufen, and plunged a powerful nation into ten years of civil war. In France the wily Philip Augustus was all too weak to withstand the Papal censures, for once inflicted on a deserving object. In Eng-

land the worthless John Lackland showed himself as abject in obeying the Pope's commands as he had just before been rash in defying them. The brave islanders saw their humbled king do homage to the agent of a foreign bishop for the crown which his fearless forefather had refused to acknowledge as a gift from any living mortal, even from Hildebrand himself. In Italy, indeed, the Pope was less fortunate; yet even there he contrived to get firm hold of provinces which former pontiffs had vainly striven to snatch from stouter rivals. With the Roman people he had little power; and Naples, after the death of Henry VI., was parcelled out among his German retainers. But Sicily, the fief which a former Pope had granted the adventurous son of Norman Tancred, Innocent still managed to rule in the name of the infant great-grandson of the far-famed Count Roger Guiscard. Throughout Europe the fame and power of Rome's high pontiff waxed very great. Kings bowed before him, and princes paid him tribute. Everywhere the battle of investitures was nearly won. Everywhere the church was towering above the world, and the Papacy seemed to spread broad and high over all.

But, during the last century, a power had slowly arisen which threatened the very life of Rome. In almost every country religious heresy was growing up side by side with the true faith. Everywhere the deepening contrast between the doctrines and the deeds of Romish Christendom had roused the

thoughtful and earnest men into revolt, more or less open, against a church so evidently fallen from the simple faith of the first apostles. A little longer, and the power of this new preaching might work some fatal mischief to Holy Church: these tares, if allowed to grow, might even choke down the pure wheat. It was not in Rome to resist so powerful a plea for wholesale persecution. She who had hated the Greek and Arian conquerors of Italy, not as conquerors, but simply as heretics, readily put forth her arm against these daring rebels, who questioned the right of their spiritual betters to fare sumptuously; and lead immoral lives. Too numerous already in the Italian and German cities, they abounded chiefly, it seems, in Languedoc, the fair domain of the polished Counts of Toulouse. To make an example of these erring fellow Christians, to torture, slay, and burn them off the face of the land, was a duty, which the Holy Father was not more earnest in preaching, than his princely and priestly delegates were prompt to undertake. Monks, bishops, nobles, kings, from many different countries, girded themselves to the godly work with the joy of bloodhounds who have fallen on the scent of blood. The helpless Count Raymond was forced to give a seeming countenance to the attack on his heretical subjects. If a knight or a soldier shrank from some special cruelty, there was always a priest at hand to urge him on. "Slay them all: God will know his own," was the word of command given at the storming of a town

where Catholics and heretics had held out in common. A blacker tale of treachery and bloodshed than this of the Albigensian Crusade, as recorded in Dean Milman's terribly truthful pages, it must surely have been the lot of few men to read or hear. Count Raymond's unhappy subjects were slain, or burned in huge hecatombs; the fairest and most flourishing land in Western Europe was given over to swarms of human locusts; hallelujahs for De Montfort's triumphs went up to heaven from a host of cowled and mitred fanatics, whose hearts, if not always their hands, had been dipped far deeper in blood than those of their lay comrades; year after year new swarms of spoilers marched, under the Papal blessing, into a land not wholly drained of its treasures: and all this was done that the Church of Rome might have peace within her borders—that men might learn the danger of thinking for themselves on matters kindly settled for them by the Pope in council—that Southern France might be forcibly welded on to the Northern Kingdom, whose ruler, Philip Augustus, had hitherto held forth but a shadowy sceptre over the country of the Troubadours.

While Innocent was busy purging the Church of heresy, putting the doctrine of Transubstantiation into formal shape, and pouring new life into the Papal system by enrolling in his service two new orders of Preaching and Begging Friars, he was also laying up trouble for future Pontiffs, by an act

which hardly proves him to have been much wiser than his neighbours. Enraged with Otho of Brunswick for certain wrongs done to himself and his young ward, Frederic of Sicily, he put his old ally under the Papal ban, called on his subjects everywhere to rise against their old master, and readily endorsed their election of young Frederic, King of Sicily and Duke of Swabia, to the crown so manfully worn by his stately grandfather. It was easy enough for the Pope to extort vows of perpetual fealty from a youth bred up in close obedience to so awful a guardian; and Frederic himself may have really felt grateful for services of which full payment had already been taken by his politic friend. But a King of Sicily and a German Kaiser in one was a union not to be desired by a Pope whose clerical interests turned clearly upon a strict observance of the precept, "*divide et impera.*" Yet to this marriage did the traditional foe of the Hohenstaufens virtually set his seal. Blinded, whether by his newborn hate of Rome's natural ally, or by his exceeding trust in the strength of his hold upon the heart and mind of his good young ward, Innocent once more unloosed the dogs of war against Guelphic Otho in favour of Ghibelin Frederic. While the new Emperor was fighting for his crown, his patron died in the flush of seeming victory over the heretics of the East and West—of seeming lordship over the mightiest princes of the world. But even Popes cannot see far into the future. His life ended amidst

a gorgeous sunset crowning a moment of miraculous calm. But with the morrow came a moaning of angry winds, a heaven overcast with mighty clouds. In the hour of the Papacy's highest grandeur the hand of a power more awful than Pope or Cæsar was already working its doom by means as yet invisible to human eyes. A great tree stood out bravely against the sky, but already the worm was eating away its roots.

After seven or eight years of fighting Frederic II. found himself firmly seated on his new throne. Young as he was, his life had been strangely chequered beyond that of most men. The infant child of a queen, whose German husband dying left her powerless to guard her Italian realms from spoilers strong and many, this heir at once of Barbarossa and Roger Guiscard seems, after his mother's early death, to have been bandied about from hand to hand for several years; now nursed by some friendly burghers in Sicily; anon a prisoner to his father's vassal Markwald; afterwards in Palermo imbibing worldly knowledge at the hands of Moslem teachers, and stores of ghostly counsel from the prelates placed about him by his self-elected guardian, Innocent III. At twelve years of age he addressed the princes of Europe, in a touchingly boyish appeal, for aid against the spoilers of his ancestral domain. King by Papal sufferance of the wrecks of his mother's Italian birthright, he was invited, at the age of seventeen, to attempt the unpromising task of ruling

the many powerful vassals of his German grandfather. In a youth so poor and powerless the great lords of his father's country deemed they had found no unworthy scion of a house already renowned above all its rivals. How well their hopes were verified, history has not now for the first time to show. In the spring of 1212 Frederic started from Palermo on an enterprise full of danger, leaving his infant son at home in charge of his queen, Constance of Arragon, whom he had married some three years before. At Rome he received the Papal blessing in return for his promised fealty to the Papal throne. Genoa hailed his coming with a joy the louder for the enmity shown him by her rival, Pisa. The Pavians passed him and his small party on towards Cremona, just in time to save him from an attack of Otho's Milanese. Thus going forward through a country of alternate friends and foes, the boy from Sicily at length crossed the Alps and reached Constance only a few hours before Otho, with a band of chosen knights, vainly summoned its bishop to let him in. Thenceforth the Hohenstaufen gained everywhere upon the Guelph. Knights, nobles, bishops began flocking to the side of him whom Rome protected, and Germany longed to serve. The fame of his grandfather, his own good qualities, the fear of Rome, the hope of plenteous rewards from a youth of generous habits, all combined to smooth Frederic's way to ultimate success. Before the end of this year he had made a league with Philip Augustus

of France: had held a grand Diet of the Empire, and had been publicly crowned Emperor of the Romans by the Archbishop of Mentz. Two years later, Otho's crushing defeat by Philip Augustus, at Bouvines, lent new wings to Frederic's onward course. The next year saw him enter Aix-la-Chapelle as conqueror, to be crowned anew in the old imperial capital of Charles the Great. In parts of Germany the war still dragged on, but Otho's death in 1218 dealt it, as it were, the finishing blow. At Goslar, a few months later, was held a great Diet, at which Duke Henry of Brunswick yielded up to the Ghibelin Emperor the Holy Cross, Lance, and Crown, so long retained by his brave, but ill-starred brother, Otho. At length the boy from Sicily was a Kaiser indeed.

Three years before that time, in 1216, the haughty Innocent had been succeeded by the gentler-minded Honorius III., who from nature rather than of set principle, shrank from enforcing with a high hand the extravagant dogmas in which, like a true Churchman, he still believed. Between him and the lay world there was comparative peace for the eleven years of his reign. Towards the new Kaiser he displayed as much forbearance, as could then be expected from a Pope impatient of any hindrance to the undertaking of a long-desired crusade, not against the heretic but the unbeliever. The Christians in the East were hard pressed; and Frederic, even before the death of Innocent, had solemnly

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taken the Crusader's vows, and exhorted his vassals to follow him to the Holy Land. These vows the Pope repeatedly urged him to fulfil, and Frederic as often promised to fulfil them in good time. But while Germany was still unsettled, nothing could be done. After he had put down his enemies, he had still to satisfy his friends: to establish a firm government in one part of his realms, and to quiet his disorderly subjects in another. South of the Alps his authority had yet to make itself felt among the Guelf partisans in Apulia. Sicily itself was still to settle. And how could a great Emperor start on a distant enterprise before he had thoroughly ensured the future well-being of his new empire, and received the last solemn tokens of his right to rule from the hands of his Holy Father, before the chief men of the Holy City? Young, zealous, and dutiful though he still was to his Papal friends, Frederic had already learned to sever his imperial interests from his spiritual ties. He would confirm the Pope in full lordship over the lands of Hildebrand's countess; he might shower his favours upon the Church with no sparing hand; his edicts against the Italian heretics might be stern enough almost to please the mild Honorius; but from Germany he would not withdraw until he had seen his little son Henry formally invested with the imperial, as well as the Sicilian crown. The excuses he made to the Pope did more credit, perhaps, to his early training than to his love of plain truth; and a bolder than

Honorius would certainly have paid him off with other coin than remonstrances. But the Pope made shift to believe the excuses, and consented to crown "his dear son Frederic," by way of prelude to the Eastern journey. So, after eight years' absence from his Italian birthland, the Hohenstaufen chief set forth again with a glorious following of princes and prelates, to receive the last certificates of his earthly greatness from the reverend successor of him whose blessing had accompanied the young adventurer on his lonely perilous way to the German fatherland. In those years the boy had ripened into a full-grown man, a wide-swaying ruler; had learned to put away many childish things; had not yet been driven by foul persecutions openly to defy the Church, whose sovereign he outwitted only for political ends.

His march southwards to Rome was one long triumph, one endless granting of charters, lands, or monies, to this or that city, lordship, or monastery. Milan would not look at him, and the Genoese he had somehow offended; but Pisa became his steady servant, and everywhere else he was hailed with the homage due to a King at once great and popular. On the 22nd November, 1220, after going through the usual obeisances, Frederic II. was solemnly invested in the ancient Basilica of St. Peter, with the crown of an Empire granted to him by "the Grace of God and of the Pope." And now, at last, it seemed to the impatient Pontiff as

if Frederic's time had come for leading his soldiers into the Holy Land. More than 400 nobles of Germany and Apulia had bound themselves to march, next spring, under the imperial banner. The glad news of their coming had gone forth to the beleaguered Christians of Damietta. A strong government, in the name of Prince Henry, ruled beyond the Alps. Northern Italy was kept in tolerable order by Frederic's lieutenants. Why was Frederic himself still backward to fulfil his vow?

To the Emperor of those days, and to the bulk of modern readers the same answer would readily come. Frederic was yet new to governing; the different parts of his Empire were ill cemented; and his own hereditary realm of the Two Sicilies had yet to be brought to order out of a state of almost chaos. Moreover the crusade which Honorius wanted must be carried out on a scale too large for the time allowed by him in getting it ready; and the oft-tried plan of draining the hot young blood of Europe into some far country, whence much of it might never return, had already ceased to win wide approval from a generation taught by its priestly guides to gather glory upon the heretics of Toulouse rather than the infidels of Jerusalem. And to Frederic himself it would naturally seem as if the Pope had special reasons of his own, for hurrying away to other lands a friend whose further presence at home foreboded evil to the cause of Papal aggression. Italy turbulent and torn by dis-

session from top to bottom, furnished an excellent lever to the Church of Rome; but this lever which in past years had done such great things, might soon be wrested from its grasp, if Frederic were allowed to stay much longer among his own people.

Stay, however, he did for the remaining seven years of the Pope's lifetime, seeming every now and then to be on the very point of starting eastwards—anon incurring the Papal reproaches, even threats, for delays which he could not well avoid. In 1221 he had even shipped off a large body of troops under trusty commanders, who would have done good service had not Damietta, through the Christians' rashness, been surrendered as a peace-offering to the Sultan of Egypt, just before their loitering galleys appeared in the Nile. The fleet being no longer needed returned home. The next year Frederic, while engaged in reducing some of his Apulian barons to order, was called back by a serious outbreak among his Saracen subjects in the West. His resolute promptness soon broke the neck of the new rebellion. The wild Arab tribes were hunted out of their hill fastnesses, and 20,000 of their picked men were transported bodily to the broad plains of Apulia, where in peace time they made him useful workmen, and in war most valiant soldiers. In 1223 he made peace with the Apulian rebels, on terms which, even in those days, would be accounted mild. In a meeting that same year with Honorius, his first wife, Constance, having died

some months before, he was offered the hand of Yolande, heiress to the titular crown of Jerusalem by the first wife of the stout old John of Brienne, if only he would straightway set about his promised crusade. The marriage took place in 1225, and preparations for a grand crusade were carried on bravely for some two or three years. Frederic and his father-in-law sent forth a joint summons to the faithful throughout Europe; but at first the faithful were slow to come in. Once more, however, Frederic bound himself, this time on pain of excommunication, to set sail by August, 1227. But in 1226 the insolence of the Lombard cities against an Emperor who had always let them alone, forced Frederic himself to move northwards with the view of making them feel his just displeasure. The Pope in his zeal perhaps for the crusade, at first made common cause with the Ghibelin ruler; but presently, as umpire between the two parties, persuaded Frederic to grant such terms to his offending subjects, as still left him free to fight with enemies worthier of a good Christian's steel. Early in January, 1227, the Pope's award was given, and received by Frederic with a hearty good-will. On the 18th March Honorius himself was dead, and the enterprise for which he had so long laboured, was carried on at last, not with the blessing, but only under the solemn ban of his fierce bad-hearted successor. Thenceforth the hollow truce of the last twelve years, between Pope and Kaiser, Guelf and Ghibelin, was to be exchanged

for a long bout of open warfare or smouldering hatred, that just took breath for another and a fiercer onset. Thenceforth Frederic's life was to be one of sore trouble, of wearing excitement, of cruel disasters, relieved by victories barren of lasting good. The king of peaceful tendencies and liberal tastes would have no rest from the arts of enemies who worried him like fiends in the name of heaven; the man who had always shown himself a good friend to the Church, a good Christian for the times he lived in, of late years a just and able lawgiver, an enlightened patron of arts and letters, was for many years to be assailed as a public outlaw stained with every crime, by all whom personal hatred, or private interests, or religious zeal, or blind fear of priestly threatenings, arrayed under the banner of a self-styled vicegerent of Him who had once declared that his kingdom was not of this world.

Meanwhile, however, it is pleasant to pause a little on the retrospect of those years during which Frederic ruled his Sicilian realms in comparative peace. While his trusty friend, the good Archbishop Engelbert, was governing Germany with a wise but gentle firmness, the Kaiser himself, with the aid of his new Chancellor, the wise and accomplished Peter de Vineâ, began to render the like good service to his own beloved Sicily. The task would soon have baffled a weaker or less active prince than Frederic. He had to break down the sovereign power of his unruly vassals, to check the

encroachments of the Holy See, to blend together a Babel of different creeds and races in obedience to one equal all-embracing law. Out of the wrecks of many former governments he had to fashion forth a new, coherent, well-ordered realm. It needed a strong hand and a steady brain to deal with this India on a smaller scale—this medley of Greeks, Goths, Arabs, Normans, Italians, and Germans, which the anarchy caused by the death of Frederic's father had split up into a thousand atoms, held together by no central law, each obeying no other impulse than the passing crave for self-advancement, or the call for self-defence. The nobles and the clergy fattened on the good things they had won with the sword, or wrested from the needs of a powerless Regency. Everywhere had sprung up new rights and privileges, more or less at variance with those of the Crown. For a King whom his enemies painted as a sensual sluggard, Frederic's success in government was rather wonderful. Somehow his devotion to the Moorish maidens of Palermo left him time enough for an amount of business such as many men of far more austere habits would have been troubled to get through. Next to establishing his royal sway over every part of the ancestral kingdom, his great, his lifelong care was to enforce the yet more absolute sway of law and justice over all men alike. It is this which, more than anything, entitles him to a high place among the heroes of history. He may have had—what ruler of his own time had

not?—the loftiest notions of his kingly prerogative, but his love of justice was yet loftier. So jealous was he for the laws of his own ordaining, that suits to which he was a party were not seldom given against him in his own courts. Against all attempts to bribe a judge or a barrister he set his face so sternly, that judges proved guilty of downright injustice were held liable to suffer death; while public infamy and a heavy fine overtook the advocate who pleaded against his conscience, or extorted more money than his due. Nor would he have one law for the noble, another for the burgher, one for the Christian, another for the Moor or the Jew; but all, as far as lay in his power, should be punishable alike for the same offences, by judgement of the same, or of nearly similar courts. Even the clergy, whom Frederic had always viewed with rather a loving eye, could be impleaded in the secular courts for all crimes against King or State, as well as for many questions of ordinary civil law. Priests were not to be exempt from their due share of the public burthens, nor from the accustomed services owing to their feudal lords. The baron could be tried by his peers; but all high courts, whether of the noble or the prelate, were done away: the King's justiciary thenceforth reigned over all.

Towards the cities Frederic behaved with like impartiality. Their special rights of asylum, taxation, and so forth, were taken away, but so also were the burthens hitherto charged upon them by

the prelates and the nobles. Now also, for the first time in mediæval history, were the cities summoned to send two or four members each, according to their size, to a parliament of the kingdom, holden twice a year, for the settlement of the yearly taxes, if for little else. To the peasantry also Frederic proved a good friend. Serfdom he abolished on his own domains. The peasant could henceforth obtain justice cheaply and surely against his lord. Stern laws were passed against those who robbed the poor man's vineyard, and creditors were forbidden to seize the poor man's cattle in payment of his debts. Over all classes, indeed, he threw the shield of his kingly favour, confirming the priests and barons in their proper rights and dignities, making the fiefs hereditary, narrowing the bounds while raising the character of the knighthood, purging the law-courts of ignorant, unlettered magistrates and unworthy pleaders, defining the services due from the peasant to his lord, allowing new settlers to live in Sicily tax-free for ten years, throwing the whole country open alike to internal and foreign trade, and fostering the mental culture of his people by establishing universities in which the learning and the wisdom of every age and country were taught by able professors, speaking the many tongues of which Frederic himself was so great a master.

Not a little of this good work was, in fact, accomplished at a somewhat later period, in the

few years of peace allowed the Emperor after his return from Palestine. But the foundations were fairly laid, and some part of the building certainly reared, before the death of Pope Honorius. Frederic's true bent was that of a peaceful lawgiver, and on this path he trod from the first with quick unfaltering step. His criminal code was not, on the whole, severe; its sterner enactments being aimed at those offences which specially tainted the life of his day. Against all breaches of the peace, all crimes of violence, against heresy, unchastity, corruption in high places, false weights and measures, forging, and selling counterfeit wares, his scale of punishment rose to a threatening height. In his dealing with heretics of his own Church he showed himself a worthy agent of the holy men who prayed to a God of love in the same breath wherewith they doomed His erring children to a horrible end. But his tolerance for the Jew, the Greek, the Moslem, so many of whom he counted among his subjects, utterly shocked the religious bigotry of an age given over to every form of crazy fanaticism, from the howling mobs of the German and Italian Flagellants to the savage austerities of the Preaching and Begging Friars. If he still in some cases allowed the use of torture, he well-nigh abolished the trial by battle, and wholly abolished the yet more foolish trial by ordeal, that favourite engine of priestly influence over the vulgar mind. Towards his own clergy he behaved with an amount of for-

bearance wonderful in a sovereign of his power and shrewdness, and little harmonizing with those faithless tendencies which his foes, forgetful of their own glass-houses, were fond of laying to his charge. Yet even the mild Honorius could not refrain from uttering a senile outcry against an Emperor who claimed some feeble voice in the election of his own bishops, and who avowed his inalienable right to banish rebellious prelates from their sees.

It was with such a monarch—so peaceful, so enlightened, so well-disposed towards Rome—that the new Pope lost no time in picking a furious quarrel. Gregory IX. differed from the Cardinal Ugolino of other days, as markedly almost as Archbishop Becket had differed from the courtly Chancellor in whom Henry II. of England once placed his admiring trust. The polished Cardinal, whom Frederic had erewhile hailed as friend, praising him for his piety, learning, eloquence, and blameless morals, was now, by virtue of his preferment, changed into a fierce, unbending foe, of morals still blameless, of manners and piety rather the worse for wear. The spirit of the Vatican entering into him some years before, had carked and eaten away the natural man, until nothing was left of him but the one embodied principle of priestly lordship over the whole world. One of his very first acts, in answer to Frederic's kindly congratulations, was the sending him a stern, imperious letter touching the Crusade, which Frederic had sworn that

autumn to begin. The Emperor, meanwhile, was really doing his best to keep his word. Troops were ready in numbers, but ships and stores were not so easily amassed. Frederic was assailed by the fiery old monk of eighty with fretful scoldings for delays he could not help. The fierce heats of July brought disease and death among the Germans, who formed the strength of Frederic's armament. Some of his best leaders were stricken down, and Frederic himself seems to have arrived at Brindisi fitter for a sick bed than to lead an army. At length however, before the days of grace were over, he set sail from Otranto with the thinned remnant of his knights and nobles. Three days later he was beating back to Otranto, seriously ill, as his own followers declared—shamming only, as the baulked and raging Pontiff was bent on having it understood. Most of his troops went on to Acre; but without their greatest leader few of them cared to go further.

There is no reason to doubt that Frederic was too ill to carry out the Treaty of St. Germano at the appointed time. But Gregory was in no mood to hear reason. Hermann of Salza, Head of the Teutonic Knights, and fast friend of his imperial patron, had already sailed eastward; and none else had power to lay the storm of the old man's unmeasured fury. The forfeit named by Honorius two years before was now exacted to the utmost letter. On St. Michael's day—amidst every adjunct that could

lend new horror to his words, the Pope solemnly placed the Emperor under the Church's ban; following up a sentence, founded on no proof whatever, with a round of letters to the different Sees of Christendom—letters which only prove how ready the oldest and most devout of Pontiffs could sometimes be to bear false witness against an unoffending neighbour. In the teeth of all evidence—for his own messengers confirmed the truth of Frederic's repeated statements—he had made haste to excommunicate the first Sovereign in Christendom; and now, in scorn alike of common sense and common decency, he flung the reins to his distempered fancy by drawing up a list of charges, containing just enough of truth to make the surrounding falsehoods the more unpardonable. Again the Emperor sent chosen messengers to try and convince the Pope of their master's innocence; they were answered only with harsh and scornful words; and twice again before New Year's day was the dreaded sentence pronounced in solemn gathering by the Papal lips.

To these wanton outrages Frederic replied by bold words and brave deeds. Firm in the loyalty of his Italian clergy and barons, he held a diet at Capua, to debate the ways and means of beginning his Crusade the next spring. Thence, too, he issued an earnest appeal to the princes of Christendom, against the insolent injustice of the Pope. "*Proximus ardet Ucalegon*," was the burden of a protest

in which he angrily enlarged on the wrongs already done by his wicked stepmother of Rome to other sovereigns besides himself. In Rome itself these words of defiance were read aloud to the admiring senators and people, by an able advocate from Bologna. In March, 1228, Gregory retorted, by placing his rival under an interdict yet more sweeping than the last. If he did not straightway humble himself, he should lose not only the privileges of the Christian, but even his last rights as a king. This was more than the Romans could any longer bear; the Pope was speedily compelled to withdraw from the Holy City.

Meanwhile, Frederic pushed on his preparations for the Crusade as merrily as if he were still the Church's favoured ally. Reinforcements were on their way to his lieutenant, Thomas of Acerra, when he lost his Empress Yolande in childbirth. Undelayed by the death of her whom, in spite of his enemies and his own frailty, he seems to have loved well, nor caring much for the Pope's continued rancour, shown directly or indirectly in many hurtful ways, he himself, with a small but choice armament, set sail once more from Otranto on the 29th June. Still lying under the Papal ban, and pursued over the Mediterranean by the ill winds of Papal malice, he found himself, on landing at Ptolemais, greeted with loyal cheers by the bulk of the pilgrims; by the clergy alone with a coldness which soon ripened into active hatred. The Knights of St. John and

the Temple, now grown into powerful bodies who fought or made peace as they chose, refused to obey the orders of an excommunicated Emperor. The pilgrims were told by priestly emissaries from Rome to obey only officers of the Pope's own naming. If Frederic tried, by treaty with the Egyptian Sultan, to win for the Christians better terms than they were like to wrest from him by force of arms, his efforts were thwarted, misrepresented, well nigh turned to naught by the intrigues of enemies in his camp, of enemies working against him at home. The Templars plotted against his liberty, if not his life. Papal forces invaded Apulia and threatened Sicily. His generous foe, the Sultan Kamil, having first scorned to catch him at a disadvantage, and then by treaty surrendered to him the holy cities of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem, the Patriarch placed all and every part of these, even to the Holy Sepulchre, under the Papal ban. The prayers of the pilgrims at the shrine they had dared so much to visit were pronounced unholy; and the Emperor, as he stood by the high altar in the great church of Jerusalem was fain to set the crown himself upon his own head, unblessed by any of the few priests who formed part of his splendid train. But if the clergy were not openly with him, the bulk of his own followers, German and Italian, were heartily on his side; and the eloquence of his high-souled friend, Hermann of Salza, must have re-echoed the feelings of all whose eyes were not wholly darkened to the

truth as between their Emperor and his ghostly rival.

After rewarding all who had served him well, and bidding all pilgrims follow him from the Holy Land, Frederic prepared to return. But the Pope, to whom he still sent letters of remonstrance and explanation, was very hard to please. Enraged at his leaving Italy, he was not less wrathful at his coming home. The treaty with the Sultan he denounced as a compact between Christ and Belial. The usual amount of Scriptural Billingsgate was poured out on Frederic's head. He was excommunicated once more; a crusade was preached against him in every foreign court; monies were levied, even in England, for the punishment of so hardened a sinner. John of Brienne, his whilom father-in-law, now his worst enemy, commanded the Papal forces. Debarred from further remonstrance, and backed by the sympathies, open or secret, of nearly all Christendom, Frederic followed up his appeal to Europe by turning his arms against the Pope. Ere long the spiteful old man was tamed into a calmer mood. Frederic, if sometimes cruel, was never implacable. By the treaty of San Germano, closed in June, 1230, the Pope agreed to withdraw his censures, if the Emperor would pardon all his rebellious subjects, and surrender his right to tax the property or to meddle with the ordinary lawsuits of the Church. At Anagni, in September, the two men, once such bitter foes, exchanged the

kiss of peace, amidst expressions of mutual respect; and once more Frederic was free to set Europe an example of wise statesmanship and liberal culture, while Gregory worked away at a revised and enlarged edition of those Decretals which form at once the shame and the pride of Roman Christendom.

For four bright peaceful years southern Italy basked in the sunshine of Frederic's even sway. In soul an artist, a scholar, and a poet, in manners genial and wonderfully refined, of a well-made, graceful figure, of a playful and fencing wit, of a temper naturally sweet and forgiving, he stands out the fitting centre to a court the most brilliant, to a nation the best governed in Europe. The reforms begun a few years before were now carried to a meet conclusion. His University of Naples, founded in 1224, was built up, as it were, anew, sustained by lavish endowments, and enriched with professorships of every kind. The study of medicine was specially enforced; Aristotle was read in his native Greek; mathematics, law, philosophy, were not forgotten. Frederic's hungry, fearless intellect revelled in the hardest questions; explored the most different fields. One while he would turn a sonnet or criticise a piece of sculpture; at another he would engage himself in writing a book on falconry, or discussing Theology by letter with an Arab sage. Metaphysics and natural history gave him equal delight; and no scholar, of whatever creed or

country, but found in him an apt hearer and a courteous friend. Nor were things of mere earthly moment overlooked withal. A taxation light and equal, trade and labour freed from a hundred shackles, quickened by treaties with foreign powers, and strengthened by the making of roads, bridges, harbours, and such like works of usefulness at home, bore ample witness to Frederic's practical foresight on points but dimly seized by rulers of a far later time.

As a relief to all this splendour, there were spots in the sun which hostile critics made out to be very large and dark indeed. In order to admire the monarch we need not cloak the frailties of the man. But we are bound to remember the age in which he lived, the character of his enemies, and the working of circumstances upon his own career. It is no more possible to believe a hundredth part of the wickedness laid to his account, than it is possible to believe in a like proportion of the wonders said to have been wrought by his crack-brained contemporary, Francis of Assisi. We do not go to Livy for the whole truth regarding Hannibal. The greatest of the Ghibelin emperors comes out a monster of cruelty, lust, treachery, unbelief, from the imaginative pencils of his Guelfic limners. Luckily for him there were facts which monkish partisans could not explain away; others which unwittingly paint themselves on the top of that wondrous medley of old wives' fables and

random gossip which forms the groundwork of mediæval history. To say that Frederic was cruel, lewd, and treacherous is only to charge him with following the bad example of his clerical teachers; even of the Popes themselves; assuredly of many a Cardinal, and of countless priests. Gregory himself was both cruel and treacherous, and some of his highest officers, his faithfullest friends, added the third vice to the other two. It was not for the chief of a Church, reeking with the treacheries and murders of Toulouse, to say aught against a King who at the very worst assailed his enemies with their favourite weapons. It was not for priests, who notoriously kept concubines, to cry out against a poor carnal-minded layman for doing just the same. But, in truth, not one of these charges is fairly proven to more than a slight extent. That Frederic could be cruel on fierce provocation we may readily allow. That he more than once gained his end by falsehood or deceit, is no more than in those days the best rulers would be wellnigh forced to do. That he was an unfaithful husband is a fact which cannot be denied. Judged by his own age he was neither treacherous nor cruel. Beside the strict puritanism, and savage bigotry of his aged foe, the luxurious splendour and ease of his own court, his steady tolerance of people and pursuits denounced by the Christianity of the Vatican, might savour of weakness, of earthly leanings, of downright sin. A single mistress would be magnified

into a harem; the very presence of Moorish ladies at Palermo would be twisted into a crime. Yet at this time Frederic counted among his staunchest followers such blameless men as Hermann of Salza, and the grave Archbishop of Palermo; while, at a later period, he seems to have gained the friendship of the anchorite King of France, St. Louis. If the proofs of his moral backslidings were somewhat doubtful, those of his spiritual hardness were next to none. The keen, scoffing wit, that spared not even the last new dogmas of the Roman Church; his fearless sallies against the tyranny, the greed, the unchristian lives of his priestly guides and guardians; his love for that heathen literature, those heathen arts and sciences, which Rome at that time would have utterly swept away, tell just as much or as little on the side of his unbelief, as his strong decrees against Lombard heretics, his many gifts to churchmen, German and Italian, or his loud professions of belief in the Church's doctrine can tell in favour of his genuine orthodoxy.

Thus, for a few peaceful years marred by one short outbreak in Messina, the great Kaiser ruled and studied and rode a-hunting, and vied with Peter de Vineâ in making verses, and shocked the Vatican with his alledged amours. But the very thought of so much greatness worked like gall in the heart of Gregory. It was impossible for two such suns to revolve peacefully together in the same universe. Causes of complaint soon sprang

up between them. Frederic would not, or, being himself busied with the Messinese, could not help the Pope against his unruly Romans. Gregory, for his part, claimed the right of acting as umpire between the Kaiser and the rebellious cities of the Lombard League. Of course, Frederic knew well that, under a fair show of sympathy with Italian patriots, the Pope, like all before and after him, was simply seeking to undermine an empire for the special good of a Papacy. The imperial troops, however, headed for a while by Frederic himself, brought timely aid to Gregory on his next brush with the Romans in 1234; but that disturbance—one of the usual half-yearly bursts of Roman fickleness—was hardly laid, when the Emperor was called away northwards to settle his own quarrel with his rebellious son Henry, who, since Engelbert's untimely murder, had fallen into evil ways and evil hands. The unhappy youth soon made his submission; but again intriguing, was sent to finish his days a prisoner in Apulia. After devoting some months to his new bride, the beautiful sister of the English Henry III., and settling the affairs of Germany with the help of his assembled lords, Frederic prepared to take stern reckoning with those Lombard cities which had abetted the revolt of his foolish son. The Pope commanded him to stay his hand, and await the judgment of the Holy See. He refused to wait after Christmas of that year, 1236. Recalled to Germany by the

revolt of Austria's archduke—no longer the loyal Leopold whom Gregory had once vainly summoned to desert his Kaiser—Frederic again descended into Lombardy in 1237, defeated the Milanese at Corte Nuova, and carried all before him, until, in the following summer, but three or four cities held out against him with the stubbornness of despair alone. By that time, however, Gregory had made up his mind. He entered into a league with Venice, who burned to avenge on Frederic the execution of her Doge's captive son. In November, a solemn indictment, containing the usual amount of truth, was published against the daring monarch who had spurned the peaceful proffers of his spiritual lord. The holy week of the next year was chosen, with the wonted blindness of Papal rancour, for the placing of Frederic and all who aided him once more under the Church's heaviest ban. Once more the Papacy and the Empire were at open war; a war as it happened for very life and death.

For the remaining twelve years of Frederic's life the battle raged, fierce words alternating with hard blows. In a bold and eloquent appeal to his brother sovereigns, the outraged Kaiser urged them at once to rally round him against their common foe, who had shown himself "a frantic prophet, a man of falsehood, a polluted priest." If Frederic spoke fiercely, the Pope's answer was a mere old woman's scream, one long, turbid tissue of wild abuse. His words fell idly on the ears of Christendom. From

Louis of France his offer of the Imperial Crown met with a sternly just rebuke. The public feeling of England and Germany was strong against him; the German prelates earnestly besought him to make peace with their honoured Kaiser; two German princes refused the offer he had already made to the French king. Against all the first princes and half the leading churchmen of Europe, Gregory could only set a few thousand Lombards, a Venetian fleet, and an army of friars. But the power of these last for mischief proved in the long run to be very great indeed. Wherever the hot-brained, barefoot brethren of St. Francis and St. Dominic pushed their way, the trail of their poisonous preaching was left behind them. For a while, however, fortune smiled on him who had the best cause, the largest armies, and the greatest number of sympathizing friends. Even in Northern Italy, where the Guelfs were the strongest, the Ghibelin party were also strong. If Genoa and Milan were hostile, Pisa and the Cremonese stood fast by their liege-lord, the Emperor. In Rome, Bologna, Ravenna, the two factions took it in turn to bear rule. The sword of the Empire was unsheathed, but still fresh overtures were sent to Rome. Gregory replied by launching fresh curses at the head of Frederic and all his sons. No fears for the future seemed to daunt the passionate, headstrong priest, whose years already had far outrun the ordinary bounds of man's life. In 1240 his

best general, Cardinal John of Colonna, agreed to a truce of which Gregory, as champion avowed of the Lombard rebels, flatly disapproved. The Cardinal, bidden to break faith with the Emperor on pain of the Pope's displeasure, at once, with most of his troops, went over to Frederic's side.

But Gregory would not dream of giving way. A great council of prelates was ordered to meet him next Easter in the Lateran. Many refused to come; many more on their way Romewards were thrown into Frederic's hands by the signal overthrow of the Genoese fleets off the island of Meloria. Fuming with rage unutterable, the Pope saw his hated rival prospering in every quarter, his very camp-fires gleaming red upon the darkness outside Rome. Presently his excess of wrath, or the unhealthy August air, laid the old man low. To the last he was implacable—unsubdued. Rising above his spiritual teachers, Frederic spoke of his dead persecutor with a large compassion and a forbearance beyond his due. The tyrant, the infidel, the blasphemer, the secret ally of Moors and Tartar savages, could yet be a better Christian than those who denounced him in the name of Jesus.

While the Cardinals were debating the choice of Gregory's successor, Frederic's gallant son, King Enzio, went forth to help his brother Conrad in routing those Mongol hordes whom the Great Kaiser had been accused of drawing into Christian Europe. At nearly the same time Christendom heard with equal

pleasure of its deliverance from Eastern savagery, and the election of a new Pope, more placable than the last. But Celestine IV. died in October, 1241, after a reign of seventeen days, and for nearly two years Christendom was left without a head. Some of the Cardinals had fled to Anagni; others were yet prisoners in Frederic's hands.

Meanwhile the war of Guelf and Ghibelin ravaged Italy none the less. The fiery gallantry of Enzio, and the fierce cruelties of Eccelin of Romano, alike failed to put down the stubborn resistance of strong-walled cities like Milan, and great sea-going republics like the Genoese. At length, urged on by the threatening words of the French King Louis and the threatening deeds of Frederic, the Anagni conclave ended the long interregnum in June, 1243, by choosing the Genoese Sinibald Fiesco for Pope. Under the name of Innocent IV., Frederic's best friend became at once his worst enemy; for no Pope, he said, could be a Ghibelin. At first, however, all promised well. *Te Deums* were sung everywhere at Frederic's command; his ablest ministers were sent on a peaceful errand to the new Pontiff, who, for his part, seemed no less willing to come to terms. But weeks passed, and nothing was settled. Complaints were still bandied to and fro, and the revolt of Viterbo hurried Frederic once more into the field. After some months of bootless fighting, the Emperor made fresh overtures, which Innocent received with a show of like goodwill. But the

Pope could neither give up the Lombards, nor release Frederic from the Papal ban as a first step towards settling the quarrel. Each, in short, mistrusted the other, and after some vexatious bickering, Innocent threw off the mask of friendship by a sudden flight from Rome to the city of Frederic's worst foes, the Genoese. Three months later he was stealing his hurried way through the Alpine Passes towards Lyons. "The wicked fleeth when none pursueth," was the Kaiser's scornful remark on a move which boded him no good.

At Lyons, amidst a council of prelates, few but compliant, the Pope not only renewed the former interdicts, but solemnly deposed the Emperor from his throne. As the assembled prelates dashed their torches to the ground, a wail, which might almost seem prophetic, arose from brave Thaddeus of Suessa, and the few who joined him in pleading for their honoured master. Frederic's star thenceforth began to pale. But this crowning insult only made him the more resolute to withstand a foe so bent on pushing him into a corner. "I hold my crown," he said, "from God alone: neither Pope, nor Council, nor Devil, shall tear it from me." In a fiery appeal to his brother princes, he blew the trumpet of an organised revolt from the tyranny of Rome's unworthy priesthood. Since when had the word of a priest come to be held more valuable than the word of an Emperor? Let who would shrink from the danger, himself, at least, would take special

pride in braving so foul a tyranny to the last. And Frederic bent himself to his up-hill work without one thought of giving in. Smiling at the bold blasphemy and cool assumptions of Innocent's counter appeal, he tried every lawful means of scotching, if he could not kill, so fierce and pestilent a foe. If the great German prelates began to fall away from a King so hateful to the Church, his secular barons ranged themselves with one accord on the side of their lawful Emperor, the victorious champion of their common liberties, as against the insolence and the greed of Rome. To his side also rallied the rising German cities, of whose interests he had always been the active, enlightened friend. Through all Europe Innocent sought in vain for a prince willing to take up Frederic's crown, until, in 1246, Henry of Thuringia, with loud misgivings, dared the venture. Next year, when those misgivings were verified by Henry's death, another appeal to Christendom brought forth no fitter candidate than young William of Holland. Frederic himself, from Turin, seemed to be steadily paving his way for a descent in force on his enemy ensconced in Lyons. The very barons of France, who had taken the cross under St. Louis, were forming a league against the bold pretensions of their Church. But from this time Innocent began to turn the tables on his daring opponent. The pious French king offered to guard Lyons from any sudden assault. Parma, hitherto of all Lombard cities the most faithful to

Frederic's cause, was suddenly seized by a body of exiles, and filled with armed defenders, before Enzio could repair the fruits of his subaltern's rash folly. A long siege, commanded by Frederic himself, ended in a fierce and fatal sally upon the strongest point of the Imperial lines; and Frederic had to bewail a ruinous disaster, crowned by the capture and cruel death of his brave, tried, most eloquent champion, Thaddeus of Suessa. Another friend, yet older and more powerful, was lost to him the following year. On a charge, true or strangely true-seeming, of plotting to poison his master, the long-trusted Peter de Vineâ was cast into prison, blinded, and only saved himself from worse torture by dashing out his own brains. A yet sadder loss awaited the unlucky Kaiser. His bravest, dearest, most accomplished son, Enzio, King of Sardinia, was taken prisoner by the Bolognese; and in spite of his father's every effort, of all his prayers, threats, promises, he was doomed to pine out the rest of his days, even twenty-three years, in durance more or less complete. Frederic's vows of vengeance remained unfulfilled; for in a few months later he himself was no more. At Fiorentino, near Lucera, on the 13th December, 1250, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, his temper soured by unmerited suffering, his great heart bowed down with sorrow, his fine frame weakened, if not by sensual excesses, at least by hard toil both of brain and muscle—the greatest of the Hohenstaufen princes breathed his last—

leaving his children the heritage of a noble name, of vast possessions, and of a curse, which, having darkened the best years of his own life, was to end, some eighteen years after his death, in making his name a clouded memory, and scattering those possessions among many strange hands.

The hatred of his enemies dogged him and his to the very last. He had died in Christian-like peace and good-will towards men, his faithful old Primate of Palermo daring to grant him, though excommunicate, the last solemn offices; his youthful son, Manfred, receiving his last sigh, and building over his corpse at Palermo a tomb the splendour of which attested the greatness of the dead, while its epitaph recorded the reverent grief of the living. But his last sufferings were tortured into a foretaste of those of hell. His son was said to have been his wilful murderer. A howl of triumph was raised over the death of one whose last acts, according to Innocent, proved him still a hardened rebel. The death of his youngest boy, Henry, three years later, was set down by the Pope himself to his brother Conrad; that of Conrad, in its turn, to Manfred. The latter was afterwards to fall at Benevento, in defence of the crown which a Pope had deemed himself entitled to give away. Guelfic rancour and Papal pride could not be thoroughly sated until Frederic's grandson, the brave young Conradin, had died upon the scaffold—guilty of trying to save his rightful realm of Naples from the savage tyranny of the

usurper, Charles of Anjou. With the fall of the Hohenstaufens fell the fair fabric of law and civil freedom, and national union, which Frederic had done so much to rear. For six hundred years Italy became the battle-field of hungry tyrants, the still-recurring prey of every spoiler who was tempted thither to aid or to withstand the Pope. For nearly three centuries the great spiritual revolt of Europe against Rome was put off by Frederic's death; and it still remained for the cotemporaries of Cavour and Garibaldi to see Italy shake off the chains, not only of foreign thraldom, but also of Papal rule in things temporal.

Was this long spell of suffering a good for Christendom or an evil? It is very well to talk of the Guelfs, as fighting for Italian freedom; it is easy to say that the triumph of the Ghibelins would have been fatal to the balance of European powers. But what Pope ever in his heart, nay, in very deed, fought for anything higher than the temporal supremacy of the all-grasping Church of Rome? That no Pope of Rome could ever be a patriot, history, from the age of the Sicilian Vespers down to that of Pius IX., has repeatedly and clearly shown. It is no more possible for a self-styled Vicar of Christ to love true freedom in Church or State, in things public or in things private, than it is for the wolf to love the sheep-dog, for Louis Napoleon to love Garibaldi, or for a government of slaveholders to sanction free-speaking in the very midst of their

slaves. Let us be duly thankful for small mercies. Out of the priestly despotism of those dark ages it may be that good has come; but the evil it wrought has not yet passed away, and the many fair growths of which it prevented the ripening are not to be left out of the general account. The true friends of freedom in those days were the princes, secular and spiritual, who fought against the power of Rome in defence of national rights, or of equal laws for all. Had the Hohenstaufens triumphed against the Popes, Frederic or his heirs would have forestalled the work now doing under Victor Emmanuel, and a strong united Italy might have played a leading part in all the great movements, political and social, of the last three hundred years. Such, at least, is the moral we would fain draw, alike from the splendidly-graphic page of Dr. Milman, and from the two well-written volumes, wherein Mr. Kington has proved how little his own later researches, fruitful as they have been of fresh documents and agreeable details, can weaken our trust in the essential truthfulness of the former.

SAVONAROLA—

PRIEST, PATRIOT, MARTYR.

If few of the great names in history shine out with a lustre equally visible to all eyes, there are not a few whose light burns baleful or benign, clear or lurid, according to the gazer's idiosyncrasy, the bent of his early training, or the range of his visual experiences. Englishmen, for instance, are not slow to extol the legislative wisdom of an Alfred, the public virtues of a Wellington, or the patriotic daring of a Nelson. In spite of one clever historian, they have not yet unlearned their old dislike of England's Royal Blue-Beard; while another has hitherto failed in winning their full assent to his wearisome apotheosis of Frederick the Great. The belief in Cleon's virtue is still confined to a few thoroughgoing believers in the sound judgement of his last English champion; nor has all the eloquence of many writers done much to soften the old English horror of such a being as Robespierre.

But there are certain classes of great men moulded after a type so strange, uneven, or many-sided, that

few can look upon them without being tempted either to worship them overmuch, or to bury them under a weight of yet more unmerited scorn. In gauging the worth of a Cæsar, a Bonaparte, or a Bacon, how ready we are to rush into either extreme, to be utterly dazzled by the great man's intellect, or to harp too long and loud on his moral failings. Yet here, perhaps, the undue disparagement may be pleaded as the protest of an independent few against the blind admiration felt by the many for success in whatever cause. Very different from these are the men to whom we specially refer. Our feelings, whether of esteem or hatred, for such as Mahomet or Cromwell seem to flow from a source more thoroughly human, to manifest themselves in a way more warmly personal. These men of strong warm hearts and eager imaginations, combined with a very good share of mental prowess, will draw us towards them as personal friends, when once we have ceased to repel them as personal foes. We may love them heartily, or hate them heartily; but look on them with a calm indifference, or even with a curious compassion, we hardly ever can. Seen through the haze of party feeling, of half knowledge, of overheated sympathies, the great Puritan Protector looms on the one hand a spirit of darkness, on the other an angel of pure light. Of such men we are willing enough to believe all good or all evil, according as their natures, aims, and doings, seem to jar against, or harmonize with our own. But to

our love or hatred, our reverence or our scorn, there is commonly no end. If Mahomet is no impostor, let us worship him as a guileless saint. If Knox was anything but a rebellious fanatic, he must surely be ranked among the noblest champions of a thoroughly noble cause.

To do full justice, yet no more than justice, to the character of such men needs at once the wisdom of a Shakespeare, and a heart as large as that of the poet who took farewell of "Auld Nickie," in words of kindly hope for his future amendment. Their mental features seem so human, yet in some phases are so perplexing, that the many are almost sure to judge them wrongly. The schoolmaster who from his prison whined out a letter full of unctuous excuses for having flogged a dull boy to death, may have been only an astounding hypocrite. But are we certain that he was only that? Is it not just as likely that his words may have come from a heart turned crazy from the excess of a fanaticism akin to that displayed by men of far greater historical mark. Wilful hypocrisy has often to answer for the results of mere self-delusion. There is a slight touch of madness in all forms of fierce enthusiasm, from the musical frenzy of a Beethoven to the mystic raptures of a Swedenborg; from the warlike preaching of St. Bernard to the lofty Jeremiads of Savonarola. It is not from temperaments of this class that hypocrites are mostly made. The ways of such men, not being all as ours, cannot be fairly judged from our usual

standpoints. It is easy to call Mahomet an impostor and the Koran a wilful forgery—but where are the proofs? A sounder criticism is content to allow that if ever the prophet knowingly deceived others, he certainly began and ended by deceiving himself.

On the other hand, we have to remember that good faith is no voucher for good deeds. Because Mahomet believed in his mission, and Cromwell offered up heartfelt thanks for the crowning mercy of Dunbar, we are not therefore bound to accept the one as a heaven-sent prophet, or to lavish unchequered praise on every word and deed recorded of the other. No amount of honest zeal can turn a crime into an act of virtue. A fellow-feeling will make us wondrous kind; but, like vaulting ambition, it is very like to send us falling on the other side. The mischief done in this world by blind enthusiasm is untold. In the whole record of human wickedness there is hardly a sin which has not been more than once committed by earnest men, for the greater glory of God. Torquemada burning heretics, Calvin hunting Servetus to a cruel death, Mahomet proclaiming the religion of the sword, Hildebrand usurping the temporal rights of kings and princes, may all have acted from the strength of a pure enthusiasm; yet what man of true candour would think of glossing over deeds like these, done in the best faith, by never so earnest champions of the truth? The tree must, after all, be judged by its fruits. Enthusiasts have never been less fallible

than any other men, and he who resents the shallow verdicts of an adverse criticism, will yet beware of floundering into overpraise of a class of heroes who, if they have sometimes opened out new worlds of light and beauty, have not seldom led their followers into a land of darkness and despair.

Like other men of kindred genius, the subject of the present article has long been bandied to and fro between the praises of injudicious friends and the blame of prejudiced or mistaken opponents. Misunderstood by his own countrymen, Savonarola fared even worse at the hands of foreign critics. If Bayle flouted him as a low impostor, Rudelbach claimed him as a pioneer of the Protestant Reformation; while Roscoe, as champion of the house of Medici, painted him as a powerful preacher, but an ambitious demagogue. Of late years, however, the memory of the high-souled Florentine has found a careful, if not very eloquent, defender in the Italian writer, whose work, as Englished by Mr. Leonard Horner, now lies before us. It is a pity that so bald a translation of a book on the whole so useful, should have been offered to the English reader. Such as it is, however, its contents are worth mastering by all who would form for themselves a truthlike image of the man who for several years filled towards the Florentines the same high office, which Samuel filled towards his countrymen before there was yet a king in Israel.

Jerome Savonarola was born at Ferrara on the

21st September, 1452. His grandfather, a physician of high repute at Padua, had taken up his abode at Ferrara many years before, on the invitation of the polished Marquis Nicholas III., of Este. His mother, a lady of good birth, was remarkable for blameless morals, commanding intellect, and "an almost masculine strength of mind." Between these two, the child's education was carried on for some ten years, when the grandfather dying left his son, Nicholas, to complete the building he had reared so far. Marked out by his family for the profession of medicine, young Jerome was duly fed on the scholastic subtleties of Thomas Aquinas, and on what of Aristotle was then known to the learned of Western Europe. In knowledge of the Greek philosophy he was afterwards to show himself no common dabbler; but his growing love for the mystic teachings of the "angelic doctor" led him away at this time, for days together, from studies more directly useful to an embryo physician. Drawing, music, rhyming, and classic literature made up the round of his boyish pursuits. By nature a quick scholar, of studious habits, high-souled, fond of brooding over the thoughts that seized or sprang from his own rich burning imagination, Jerome probably mixed but seldom in the sports and pastimes dear to children endowed with tougher nerves and harder muscles than himself was likely ever to have owned. In the life that sparkled round him, bright as the sun of his native land, but rotten beyond what Italy had

known for centuries back, he saw much to muse over, but far more to loathe. From the gay doings within the palace, from the splendid pageants that served to drown the memory of human blood, shed between whiles in the streets of a city then famous for its crowds and luxury, the pure-minded, sensitive dreamer would turn away with instinctive shuddering, with a strangely vivid foretaste of the doom that would surely overtake a people thus lapped in heathenism and all wantonness.

"Heu! fuge crudeles terras, fuge littus avarum," was the cry that fell continually from his lips. Into the ducal palace, so gloomily grand without, within so gay and gorgeous, his parents even could not persuade him to go. His sadder thoughts he beguiled by the mournful music of his lute, or breathed out in verses glowing with heartfelt anger and holy scorn. At other times he would pore, like one entranced, over the pages of his beloved St. Thomas, or pass long hours in earnest study of that Holy Writ which became the meat and drink of his later years.

Already in the youth's heart had begun the struggle which all men of like enthusiasm have one day to pass through. As Mahomet prayed and pondered among the caves of Mount Hira, as Luther was erelong praying and battling with the Evil One in the lonely Wartburg Castle, so did the young Ferrarese student bear himself amidst the din and splendour of his native town. Frequent fastings, sad reveries, and long prayers, revealed the fierce-

ness of his mental agony, while they encouraged, if they did not beget, the dreams and visions which his overheated fancy clothed in the hues and outlines of heaven itself. How, under kindlier circumstances, the battle might have ended it is hard to say. But one thing seems about this time to have fixed the tenor of his after-life. He had fallen in love with a fair maiden, daughter of a high-born Florentine exile. But a lady of the house of Strozzi scorned to mate herself with a Savonarola; and the rejected lover found himself torn for ever from the one tie that might still have bound him to a purely secular career. Thenceforth the world grew altogether hateful to a youth whose earthly happiness had all been staked on that fatal venture. He fell back on his prayers and fastings for the solace denied him elsewhere. Religion became the mistress of his future life.

His great love for Thomas Aquinas inspired him with a secret wish to don the cowl of a Dominican friar. As a member of the great preaching brotherhood founded by St. Dominic in the days of Innocent III., he might also hope to make his voice heard to some good purpose in a city which seemed in its wickedness to rival Sodom and Gomorrah. But, after his mind was fairly made up, it cost him a whole year of hard inward struggle before he could bring himself to take the irrevocable step which would carry him for ever away from his home and dear ones.

At length, in April, 1475, in the twenty-third year of his age, Savonarola set out from his father's house, and gained admission into a Dominican convent at Bologna. His first thought after his arrival was to write his father a long letter, full of loving entreaty and earnest pleading, in excuse of a flight so sudden and seemingly secret. His own sorrow at leaving his parents was even greater, he virtually said, than theirs could be at losing him. But he prayed his father, as "a man of firm mind," to judge for himself dispassionately, and "by reason alone," whether his son had done rightly in flying from a world of sin to become a soldier of Jesus Christ. If he loved his son truly, he should rather rejoice at that son's obedience to the commands of his Heavenly Father, who had pointed out to him this only way of escape from a world of wickedness, from a very "sink of infamy." Little as such pleading might satisfy those who doubt if flying to the cloister be the best way of serving God, it may have helped to lull the storm of a parent's sorrow, while it certainly went near to show the deep simplicity of the writer's faith in himself and his close communion with the world above. Whatever murmurs may have reached him in reply to his first letter were, doubtless, silenced after the receipt of another, in which the renewed expression of his unchangeable resolve was backed up by earnest chiding of his parents for their blindness to the honour thus freely bestowed by Heaven upon their son.

In the Bolognese monastery, Savonarola passed the first seven years of his monkish life. Living at first in the closest privacy, with all the self-punishing sternness of a Dominic, he was erelong bidden to exchange his menial duties for the task of teaching his brother novices. Loath at the first to leave the solitude and shorten the penances of his own choosing, he soon learned to delight in impressing on other minds a knowledge of the truths by which his own was stirred. His success in teaching was quickly rewarded by fresh promotion; but his earliest attempts at preaching seem to have met with small acknowledgment outside the walls of his own monastery. Was his style too artless or his matter wanting in worldly interest? That he satisfied his own superiors, may be gathered from their sending him, in 1482, to preach at Ferrara. Here again, his preaching seems to have made no general stir. His hearers were either loath to believe in the merits of their mean-looking fellow-townsman, or unaccustomed to his peculiar style of oratory. Perhaps, too, they had little time to do him justice, for the same year saw him depart for the last time from his native city and the familiar faces of his youth. The war which was erelong to light up all Italy, had begun to crackle about Ferrara; and Savonarola was ordered to take up his abode in the monastery of St. Mark, at Florence, the destined theatre of his greatest triumphs and his headlong fall.

When the wicked Pope Sixtus IV. was conspiring with the Venetians to gratify their mutual lust of power at the cost of other Italian princes, Florence was basking in careless ease under the splendid-seeming sway of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The crafty grandson of the great Duke Cosmo belonged to that class of lucky tyrants whose evil deeds are obscured by their success in pandering to the lower wants of the unlearned many, and beguiling the artistic sympathies of the cultivated few. A finished libertine, a ruthless tyrant, a wasteful guardian of the public purse, he feasted his subjects with endless shows and sports, wrote the coarse verses they sang at carnival time, and made Florence beautiful with masterpieces of monumental art. If freedom sickened and died out beneath the spells of so cunning a Circe, the fine arts and the new learning at any rate throve apace under a ruler trained in all the accomplishments of his day; among whose bosom friends were Pulci and Politian; at whose table sat young Michael Angelo; whose guide in philosophy, the learned Marsilio Ficino, became the head of his new Platonic Academy, and listened, perhaps with genuine delight, to the brilliant talk and bold speculations of his former pupil. During the reign of this Florentine Mecænas, Florence became the central resort for scholars of almost every nation, who flocked to hear Ficino expound, in a heathen tongue, his somewhat heathenish amendments on the old Greek philosophy. The classic culture which the Greek

exiles from Constantinople had already made the fashion throughout Italy, gave its own colour to the growing scepticism of the day. In the land which Peter had once hallowed with the headship of the Christian church, men were everywhere learning to exchange the religion of the Bible for the poetic paganism of the days of Virgil. It seemed as if the old gods of Rome were taking their revenge at last on the rude Christianity of the Dark Ages.

Such was the social state of Florence when Savonarola first entered the monastery of St. Mark. To a man of his earnest, thoughtful nature the general outlook was far from cheering. If the comfortable classes were little better than polished heathens, their spiritual leaders were hardly less removed from the faith of the early Christians. In his own convent he found but few traces of the spirit which ought to have been active among the followers of St. Dominic. Discarding the Bible for its bad Latin, the monks spent most of their time in discussing the relative merits of Plato and Aristotle. The most popular of the Florentine preachers were those who in their thoughts and language came nearest the grace and purity of the old classic writers. Against all this the new preacher resolutely inveighed in language plain, passionate, unstudied — marked by frequent vulgarisms of phrase and accent—accompanied by gestures wild and even threatening. Storming in his own rude way at the vices of the people, at the irreligion of

the clergy, at the absurd love of all for the old classic literature, he enforced the simple teaching of the Bible by frequent quotations from the Bible alone. What wonder that such a man, speaking to such hearers should at first have failed to win the attention of those who crowded, at set times, to admire with Politian "the sounding voice, the choice language, the noble sentences, and harmonious turns" of the more rhetorical Father Gennezzano!

Nor were his personal traits likely to take hold at first upon his hearers' fancy. Of middle size and dark complexion, with a low wrinkled forehead, hooked nose, eyes dark and burning, but set deep under their dark beetling eyebrows, with a large, full-lipped mouth, that seldom softened into even a faint sad smile, with cheekbones staring out from cheeks already hollowed by much thought and fasting, he had little enough to commend him at first sight to a people prone, alike from nature and long habit, to worship outward beauty rather than look for inward strength and nobleness. His bodily presence, like his manner of preaching, lacked the grace, which even they who were readiest to admire his doctrine could not easily bring themselves to do without.

To Friar Jerome's sensitive nature such a failure was saddening enough. But his strong enthusiasm quickly drowned the voice of any weaker emotion. "Elegance of language"—he said to a friend—

" must give way before simplicity in preaching sound doctrine." His keen sense of the wickedness of a lustful and blood-shedding age, drove him on to fiercer and ever fiercer bursts of missionary zeal. The very coldness of his hearers seemed to add fresh fuel to his imaginative frenzy, fresh sinews to his resolute will. He felt himself called, like the prophets of old, to bear witness against human sins. Trances, which in these days are traceable to earthlier sources, came upon him with growing frequency, as he talked to his brother monks; and the visions seen therein took to his own hot fancy the form of an actual revelation from above. In one of them the heavens opened, the woes impending over Christendom were unfolded before him, and a voice commanded him to make them publicly known. His growing zeal was soon quickened by the growing wickedness of the Papacy under the new Pope, Innocent VIII. At San Geminiano, in the mountains near Siena, he found a more impressible audience, and trained himself by steady practice in all the minor mysteries of the preacher's art. Towards the close of 1486, he was sent to preach in several of the Lombard cities. His success at Brescia, in the following Lent, stamped him as a master in the art of stirring men's souls through their ears. Taking the Apocalypse as his text-book, he stormed upon his hearers in a voice of thunder, in language big with the consciousness of coming woes, and blazing with the imagery which

his boundless fancy poured forth in aid of his soaring enthusiasm.

Thenceforth the friar's doubts of his own mission were all swept away. The fame of his eloquence began to spread, while the power of it, as displayed soon after at Reggio, before a chapter of Dominicans, won him the steady friendship of Pico, Prince of Mirandola, the Philip Sidney of his day. After some three years spent in Lombardy, he preached at Genoa during the Lent of 1490. From thence, at the urgent request of Lorenzo de' Medici, with whom Pico had pleaded in behalf of his new friend, Savonarola was recalled to Florence by his superiors; and thus, by one of those seeming chances on which men are wont to theorize, each after his own lame fashion, did the head of the house of Medici unwittingly pave the way for the early downfall of his own dynasty, through a monk of the convent founded by his own grandfather.

Returning to St. Mark's, Savonarola kept himself awhile in the background, training the novices in those higher duties which a corrupt priesthood had long since forgotten to discharge for the good of a careless people. But other than the novices only soon began to listen to the lectures delivered by the rose-tree, within the cloisters of St. Mark. At length, on the 1st of August, he was persuaded to preach to a larger audience gathered within the church itself. This time the listless Florentines yielded to the spells they had once ignored. With

a strange interest, deepening presently into a rapt awe, they flocked to hear this startling compound of Thomas Aquinas and John the Baptist unfold the countless meanings suggested to his eager fancy by a single page from almost any part of the Bible; while all his eloquent conceits, mingled as they were with scornful protests against the philosophy which still governed him unawares, were made, again and again, to lead up to the one same burden, in whatever words expressed—"Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

His audience soon outgrowing the convent church, in the Lent of 1491, he began to preach within the Cathedral of St. Mary. The friends of the Medici took alarm at the tone of his sermons, and sent to warn him of his rashness in meddling, as such a man was like enough to do, with the political questions of his day. But a mind like his could not long be content with the narrower bounds of moral and religious teaching. Whatever God revealed to him in his visions, that he must still make known to others, happen what might to himself. So, after some vain attempts to narrow his range of preaching, he yielded to the voice of his self-upbraidings, and burst forth with another "tremendous sermon," in which the cup of God's wrath was poured out on Italy and her godless rulers.

In July of the same year he was chosen Prior of his convent. According to the custom of St. Mark's, her new head should have gone and paid homage to

Duke Lorenzo. "My election comes from God only," were the words in which he refused to declare himself bounden to any man. "A stranger has come into my house, and will not deign to visit me," was Lorenzo's comment on the ungracious speech. When the Duke, after hearing mass, walked in the convent garden, the new Prior would never take heed of him. Rich presents came from the Palace to St. Mark's; much gold was found in the convent's poor-box. All such advances were met with coldness, with open scorn. The gold was divided among the poor outside the convent walls; in rude words, spoken from the pulpit, Lorenzo was informed of his utter failure in winning the friendship of so stern a foe to tyranny and paganism, clothed in never so tempting a disguise. In revenge for such continued discourtesy, the once popular Gennezzano was set up to preach his old rival down. But this new weapon was broken in twain at the first trial, and Gennezzano had to reserve to a fitter season the payment of his own grudge against the twice-conquering friar.

Little as the latter cared for Lorenzo, it was not long before the princely Florentine was to give the last great proof of his own reverence for the unbending Savonarola. In April, 1492, as he lay dying of a sharp disease, the thought of sending for a confessor to smooth his passage out of the world came often into his mind. His choice fell upon Savonarola. "I know no honest friar but him"

was the reason he gave for so choosing. After some demurring, the Prior came to the sick-bed. When Lorenzo had confessed the sins that weighed heaviest upon him, the stern Dominican bade him do three things—avow his lively faith in God's mercy, make atonement, through his children, for wrongs done, and restore freedom to the Florentines. To the first demand a cheerful, to the second an unwilling assent was given by the dying sinner. In answer to the third he turned his back on the friar. Unyielding as ever, Savonarola stalked away, and Lorenzo the Magnificent died unabsolved.*

Before the end of the same month Innocent VIII. had gone the way of Lorenzo, and his place was bought by the highest bidder, Cardinal Borgia, thenceforth infamous as Alexander VI. These two deaths gained for Savonarola no small credit as a prophet with all who knew of his having foretold them some months before. To himself, of course, the lucky coincidence, or whatever else it might be called, seemed proof conclusive of his prophetic mission. But the fear of his growing influence with the people seems to have brought about his temporary absence from the city now ruled by Piero de' Medici, the weak heir of a stronghanded and wise sire. At the time of the Pope's death he was preaching at

* There seems little doubt that this is a truer version, in the main, of the story of Lorenzo's last hours than the tame and confused account given by Politian, who paid more heed to his Latinity than his facts.

Pisa, and in the spring of next year at Bologna, whose master, John Bentivoglio, lorded it over his people with no light hand. Here too, a failure at the outset was erelong followed by a great success. He who at first was deemed a simpleton, fit to preach to women only, afterwards drew all classes crowding about his pulpit. The proud wife of Bentivoglio came often to hear his sermons, but came always in the middle of the service, followed by a large and splendid train. "Behold, behold the devil, come to interrupt the word of God!" cried out at last the indignant preacher, when all other ways of showing his displeasure had been tried in vain. Two of her followers were ordered to slay him in his pulpit, but failed, either for want of courage or for the throng that barred their efforts. Two assassins made their way to his cell, but slunk away—so runs the legend—overawed by his commanding presence and solemn words. Presently the dauntless friar gave out that he should sleep at Pianoro, on his way back to Florence, armed only with his walking-stick and a wooden flask. "My death," he added, "will not take place at Bologna," and none dared to put his prophecy to the proof.

Returned to Florence, Savonarola set himself at once to reform the discipline of his convent, and to ensure his freedom from further vassalage to the monks of Milan, who for half a century had held an authorized sway over the Tuscan monasteries. With the craftiness which he could sometimes show, he made such interest, both at Rome and with Piero de'

Medici, that the two persons who had soon best cause to hate him, joined in furthering his scheme of monastic independence; and an order from Pope Alexander made the Prior of St. Mark's answerable thenceforth to Rome alone. Thus strengthened, he began to sweep off the abuses which had gradually overgrown the stern simplicity of the Dominican rules. Poverty, humility, self-denial, were enforced by decrees which forbade the monks to hold property, to wear rich clothing, to adorn their cells with illuminated books, costly crucifixes, and such-like worldly gewgaws. At the same time they were encouraged to earn their own livelihood by applying the worldly arts of painting, sculpture, and music, to the embellishment of holy, if not of secular themes. For the better understanding of those Scriptures which the Prior set forth as the beginning and end of all knowledge, instruction was given to all who sought it in the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic tongues. Under the new rule, St. Mark's became the model and the mistress of like establishments elsewhere. Many of the well-born Florentines sought admission into its brotherhood, and not a few of the Tuscan monasteries speedily placed themselves under the direction of a prior whose name for holiness, eloquence, and honest zeal, was already blazoned far and wide throughout Florence.

While Father Jerome was setting his house in order, denouncing the clergy for their evil lives, their devotion to Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Cicero,

rather than Christ, and firing men's hearts with earnest pleadings on the beauty of faith, love, meekness, and other Christian virtues, a storm, which it needed no great prescience to foretell, was ready to burst over Italy and the House of Medici. Ludovic, the Moor, the ursurping Duke of Milan, was calling on Charles VIII. of France to come and wrest the kingdom of Naples from its Spanish ruler. The young French monarch readily caught at an opening which might lead to the conquest of other realms than Naples only. The Pope himself at first hailed the idea of a French invasion with much spiteful joy. If few of the Italian princes wished well to a foreign peace-maker, his coming seemed to foretoken more of good than evil to the bulk of their subjects. To him Savonarola looked, of him he continually prophesied, as the saviour and the scourge of Italy. On the 21st of September, 1494, the news of the passage of French troops across the Alps reached Florence. A great crowd listened that day in silent awe to the friar's terrible description of the flood which God was bringing on the earth. In the general panic, all eyes turned for guidance to the hooded priest of St. Mark's, who seemed to foretell the doom his own words were likely enough to hasten. Trembling for his own safety, Duke Piero, the ally of Naples, sought to make terms with the French invader. Those which he accepted were so humbling that all Florence rose in arms against her unworthy master. He had to

slink out of the city as he best could; and after seventy years of Medicean bondage, the Florentines were once more free, as sheep without a shepherd might be in presence of a wolf.

Great was the wrath of Charles VIII., and vainly did an embassy of five men, one of whom was the Dominican himself, use their eloquence on the partisan of Piero. At the head of his troops he entered Florence, and demanded the reinstatement of the Medici. His threats were lost on the bolder of the Florentine magistrates. If he should sound his trumpets, the city, said fearless Piero Capponi, "*would toll her bells.*" In a riot, caused by French insolence, the King's soldiery were beaten back by the stones and courage of a mere mob. Savonarola himself went a second time to plead with Charles. Awed, as in those days he well might be, by the prophet's lofty bearing and the seeming fact of his twofold commission from heaven and the Florentine people, the King yielded with the better grace to a preacher who gave him good reasons for sparing Florence in the very prospect therein revealed to him of great glory, power, and profit, to be won elsewhere. On the 28th of November, two days after signing his new treaty, he left Florence to her own devices, carrying away with him the choicest plunder of the Medicean palace, and the qualified thanks of all patriotic Florentines.

Thenceforth, for several years, the Dominican friar reigned the Samuel of a reformed Florence.

To him the people looked for the framework of their new government; in his sermons they found a regular course of instruction in all things pertaining to the life of man. At his word they chose the chief magistrates, and made or changed the laws of the new Republic. What the Koran was to Mahomet's followers, Savonarola's preaching proved to the Florentines. Under the Lord Jesus and the Virgin Mary, he was appointed to show them the way to political as well as moral perfection. Luckily, his statesmanship was less wild than his dreams. Averse from despotism, he had no liking for a pure democracy, that favourite tool of despots in all ages. Demagogue as he might be called, he would have the government modelled after a plan which left the ruling power in the hands of a comparative few. The old tumultuous *Parliament* of the whole people was done away. The old Signory of nine formed a kind of executive, aided by a senate or council of eighty, who decided all questions of peace and war, and drew up the laws which a greater council, composed of high placeholders, their sons and grandsons, was empowered to pass or reject. The fiscal system of the Republic owed to Savonarola the benefit of a sweeping reform. Certain abuses in the judicial system were also lopped away. To him too was Florence indebted for a revolution as bloodless as it was great. A general pardon for past offences sealed the inaugural measures of the new government; and, by the middle of the year 1495, Florence

seemed to have entered on a course of peaceful, well-ordered freedom, such as Venice in her best days could hardly have rivalled.

There was one, however, of the Tuscan cities to which the priestly lawgiver dealt out a different measure from the rest. It was not meet that Pisa should retain the freedom granted her by Charles VIII. Under the assurance of a heaven-ordained victory, the people of Florence were bidden to go forth against the rebellious city and subdue it. From inconsistency like this our honest friar was no more free than other men.

Hand-in-hand with the political went on a great social reform, the one like the other carried on from the pulpit. In a powerful course of sermons on the Book of Job, sermons imperfectly written down by one whose mental anguish often made him pause, Savonarola never tired of beseeching his hearers to lead better lives, to live in peace and concord, as behoved true Christians and honest patriots. They who heard him sobbed aloud. Towards the libertines and the gamblers he would show no mercy. Against every form of luxury he thundered with all his might. A moral epidemic seized on the people. Florence was no longer the same city. Young rakes forswore their evil ways. Ladies of fashion cast aside their trinkets, and walked demurely in sober attire. Lorenzo's carnival-songs gave place to holy hymns. The churches were filled with praying crowds. Tradesmen passed their leisure hours in

reading the Bible or some new work by their honoured friar. And merchants refunded large sums of money to those whom they had erewhile cheated of their dues. One course of sermons followed another, until all Florence was wrapt as it were in the fire of a new fanaticism, which burned the fiercer for the spiritual drought of so many past years.

With growing power grew the sternness of the new sway. Florence, the gayest of Italian cities, came to wear the aspect of a New England town in the saddest days of English Puritanism. For half the year a kind of Scotch Sabbath brooded over these sunlit streets and squares. Public sports and shows were mercilessly forbidden, or stripped of all their earthlier charms. The very children, formed into a sacred band, were encouraged to do the work of a moral police, to make inquisition after evil from house to house, to seize, in the name of Christ and the Holy Virgin, on everything which savoured of vice or needless luxury. In vain did their own parents chafe at their lawless excesses. If the elders of the city would still hanker after worldly vanities, they should be taught their duty by the example of their own children. A great "Bonfire of Vanities" proclaimed the friar's resolve to go any length in putting down the carnival which some were already seeking to revive.

Out of the pulpit, Savonarola enforced his teaching with the pen. Given to poetry from his youth,

he still, from time to time, poured out his soul in verses aglow with lofty passion, how weak soever in the nameless charms of stronger or more finished poets. But his prose works were at once more numerous and more remarkable. Besides earlier treatises on many subjects, and divers handbooks for the use of his monkish brethren, he had lately brought out his "Compendium Revelationum," and was soon to bring out his "Dialogues on Prophetic Truth," in both of which he dwelt on the subject of his own visions, and, in a warmly illogical way, avowed his own belief in their divine origin. Full of marvels akin to those in the Koran, of arguments which raise a smile at their weakness or their self-rebutting power, these earnest utterances of a guileless, humble, darkly luminous soul, would at once dispel from any candid mind the least doubt of the writer's perfect truthfulness, of his invincible faith in the soundness of his own illusions. In another work, written about the same time, on the "Usefulness of the Sciences," he enlarged, by the way, on his own idea of poetry, its true sources, ends, and beauties, as contrasted with the false principles and immoral practices of so many poets ancient and modern. Other pamphlets, mainly on religious subjects, followed from time to time; last of all his "Triumph of the Cross," which, beginning with well-reasoned proofs of God's existence, went on to discuss, point by point, the whole body of Christian doctrine, as held by the Roman Church, and wound

up with an able defence of that doctrine against all claims put forth in behalf of any other form of religious belief. Amidst all his flights of mysticism, his bold graspings at the inward truth of things, Savonarola never for a moment lost himself in a maze of theological doubts, never cast aside the least of those dogmas which made up the ruling creed of mediæval Christendom.

Meanwhile, however, clouds had begun to gather both round Florence and her spiritual ruler. The Medici still had their partisans in a city at all times famous for its factions. Beside these were soon arrayed an evergrowing band of those who kicked against the harsh discipline enforced by the saintly-minded friar. Nor could Pope Alexander help sharing largely in the grudge borne by the Tuscan priesthood towards the unsparing assailant of all priestly vices and shortcomings. Even in 1495, he had shown his bias by an attempt to silence the bold Dominican. But his hatred had to keep itself unsatisfied for better times. Savonarola was left free to preach more of his terrible sermons, to go forth and greet the French King with solemn reproaches for his treachery towards the Florentines, his disobedience to the Divine commands. The return of Charles VIII. to France exposed Florence to new dangers. Backed by Rome, Lombardy, and Venice, Piero de' Medici set out with his troops on the road to his native city. Roused betimes to their duty by the fierce speeches of Savonarola, the Florentines

took care to forestall the invader; and Piero, cursing the slackness of his allies, withdrew to his Roman shelter, there to brood over past mishaps and plot schemes of future revenge.

The French having gone their way, Alexander again bethought him of silencing a preacher whose sermons teemed with passages directly or indirectly condemning the Borgia; whose very power over the Florentines seemed like a standing protest against the wickedness that reared its crest in Rome. In July, 1495, Savonarola was bidden, in words of honey, to go and talk with the Pope in his own city. In excuse, the friar pleaded his slow recovery from a wasting illness, his fear of enemies who were daily plotting against his life, and his earnest desire to see the new Republic fairly started on the way to lasting good. The Pope answered graciously enough. In good truth the friar needed rest alike from preaching and all study. A farewell sermon, from lips that trembled with weakness, scarce held in check by the glow of a passing excitement, told his hearers how sorely his health had suffered from much toiling in their behalf. In a month he hoped to meet them again, but meanwhile his life, already shortened by past efforts, hung upon his abstinence from all work.

In September, however, another letter came, addressed to the Franciscans of the *Holy Cross*, but meant in effect for Savonarola. His answer was that course of sermons which united Florence

against the attempt of Piero. In November came a third letter forbidding him to preach at all. The still obedient friar bowed his head to a doom which served at any rate to rest his weakened frame, and enabled him to soothe his family in their misfortunes with letters full of deep compassion and earnest longing for the life to come. Sorrowing with them in all their sorrows, he prayed his mother to nerve her heart by faith against all that might happen to her children—"so that if I should chance to suffer death, you may not take it too much to heart; if I should fall, you also may not fall."

In the Lent of 1496, Savonarola was once more in the pulpit, thanks to the powerful pleading of his Florentine friends. Nay, more, he was offered the red hat of a cardinal if he would only lower his tone. To this proffer of a shameful bribe, he gave his only answer in the sermons on Amos and Zechariah, preached that very season, amid circumstances more than commonly exciting. Fresh rows of seats had to be put up in the great cathedral, and the preacher set forth from his convent, guarded by a body of armed friends, while other companies lined the streets, ready for the first signs of any hostile movement; for plots against the friar were already brewing among the "malignants," who lacked as yet the power or the boldness to attack him with fairer weapons. In these new sermons he rose to his greatest height. His late submissiveness towards the Pope suddenly turned into a bold defiance of

human as matched with Divine commands. If the Pope bade him go against the Gospel, it was not the Gospel that should give way. If any one commanded him to leave a city to whose well-being his stay was needful, he would certainly disobey. Hitherto his prudence had kept him silent; but now that good men were growing cool, and wicked men bold, what could he do but speak out? The word of the Lord was in his heart, and would utterly consume him if it came not forth. The key-note thus sounded, he went on Sunday after Sunday, declaiming, like a prophet of old, against the sins of Florence and of Rome, the wicked enmity of the elders, the foolish vanities of the women, the religious hypocrisy of the people at large, who loved only the outward shows and pomps of religious worship; who were "good one hour of the day, that they might be wicked the rest of their lives." For the great sins of Rome and of Italy there would come a scourge upon the land; it should be stricken with a grievous sickness, even unto death. Its princes should be visited with cruel wars; its people wasted by a woeful pestilence. There should not be men enough left to bury the dead, but people with carts would go from house to house, collecting the bodies that they might be burnt in heaps. For himself the day was coming when he, too, would undergo his doom at the hand of enemies thirsting for his blood.

Of war, indeed, the Florentines were soon to have

enough. Pisa was still unconquered; and during that autumn Leghorn, whence Florence drew her supplies, was closely invested by the soldiers of Maximilian and the fleets of Venice. Sore rent by internal factions, Florence saw famine creeping on her from without. Savonarola was again forbidden to preach by the Holy Father, whose sense of decency had been shocked by stories of the wild pageant wherewith the simple friar had sought to displace the old heathenish carnival. For some weeks the Dominican held his tongue, until the earnest prayers of the Signory brought him again into the pulpit, in the hope of cheering his dismayed and bewildered countrymen. His eloquence was aided by good news from Leghorn, and before the end of November the great danger from without had passed away; the Pope for the moment made no further sign; and the friar's supremacy seemed once more thoroughly assured.

But the storm in his case had only lulled. A second bonfire of vanities, indeed, proclaimed the strength of the friar's influence, and his Lent sermons for 1497 were received with general applause. Piero de' Medici once more failed to enter Florence. But the malignants soon returned to their plotting, and Pope Alexander had not ceased to think of vengeance. In May he issued his bull of excommunication against the friar. The breaking-out of the plague at Florence in June directed men's thoughts for a while to the dangers

nearer home; and the friends of Savonarola were still powerful enough to enforce the doom of death on the leaders of another plot, discovered in August, for overthrowing the new Republic. In the latter business the friar's own share seems to have been little or naught, while the Papal sentence on himself kept him from performing any public duty during the few weeks the plague lasted. But in October came another letter from the Pope, arraigning "one Jerome Savonarola" for blasphemous and heretical teaching, and sternly forbidding him to preach or lecture even within St. Mark's. Still he shrank from open rebellion, leaving his friends in the Signory to plead his cause at Rome, while from his own cell he issued letters, tracts, and longer treatises to prove his own orthodoxy, and the nullity of Papal sentences in a case like his. Thus quietly was ending the last year but one of the bold reformer's life, when, on Christmas Day, he once more broke from his self-imposed fetters, and led the solemn services in his own convent before a crowd of assembled Florentines.

Early the next year a friendly Signory pressed him, not in vain, to renew his preachings in the cathedral. Amidst the hootings and stone-throwing of his enemies, he made his way to his old triumphal seat, and discoursed to overflowing crowds, of the great questions threatening his own life and the freedom of his beloved city. His language grew plainer, if not more stirring, than before; he would

rather die, he would sooner be sent to hell, than ask for absolution from the sentence unlawfully passed on him by the venal rulers of the church. He was not bound by every order of a Pope, who might act as wickedly, might err as greatly in his judgment, as any other man. His enemies sought his ruin for daring to speak the truth, to bear witness against them, as Paul did against Peter, "when he was to be blamed." But in spite of Pope and Cardinals, and all who aided them, his doctrine was true; and if need should arise, the Lord, through him, would work a miracle to enforce it. The last day of the Carnival was signalized by a procession more splendid, by a bonfire larger and more extravagant, than those of former years.

Meanwhile the monk's old enemy, Gennezzano, was inflaming men's minds at Rome against the impious "Man of Ferrara," who called the Pope *a broken rod of iron.* Again Alexander wrote to the Florentine Signory, commanding them, on pain of an interdict, either to send the Friar in bonds to Rome, or to keep him shut up and silent among themselves. At their request, Savonarola again left his pulpit "for such time as it should please the Lord." Withdrawing to St. Mark's, he still preached at times to a diminished audience of men alone. In these latter sermons he openly broached the subject of a General Council, which should punish the wicked clergy and depose "a bishop convicted of simony and schism." All men knew at whom this

dart was levelled; and the friar followed up the new move by sending letters to all the princes of Europe, in which he exhorted them to summon a Council for the deposition of a Pope who was no Pope. One of these letters falling into Borgia's hands, raised his fury to the highest pitch.

But the Pope's anger worked less harm for his enemy than the mad zeal of the friar's own followers. One of these, friar Dominic, accepted the challenge of a Franciscan knave or zealot, to test the fact of Savonarola's inspiration, by undergoing the ordeal of fire. A day was appointed, a pile of fire-stuff prepared; five hundred soldiers kept off the wonder-loving crowd; a number of volunteer guards surrounded either champion and his friends. At the hour named, the Dominican was ready—was burning to enter the flames in his master's presence, for his master's sake. But the Franciscans hung back. On one pretext after another, their champion put off the critical moment. Time passed. Heavy showers fell upon the wearied people, and still the Franciscan did not appear at his post. At length the Signory forbade the ordeal to go on. In the midst of a fearful riot, upbraided even by his own followers for delays arising from the arts of his opponents, Savonarola sadly struggled back to St. Mark's. The spell was broken; the sun of his power was fast setting in black clouds. His bravest partisans were murdered in the streets by ruffians thirsting for his own blood. After a brave but bootless stand, the

monastery itself was stormed, and he who had lately been the soul and guiding will of a whole people, was led forth, bound and powerless, a butt for the coarse jeers and cowardly insults of a ruthless fickleminded crowd.

The Pope's joy was very great. All he now desired was to make an example of the Friar in the Holy City itself. But the Florentine rulers had already begun the good work upon the spot. They had their victim tortured and tortured again; but the confessions wrung from him by the exquisite pain of the moment, were as regularly recanted in his calmer hours. At length the proper scoundrel turned up, through whose agency the mass of wild, jarring, and perplexed statements were cooked into a practicable report. After a month's imprisonment, the poor suffering, yet still unconquerable friar, was again examined, and again tortured before the Papal Commissioners. The pain that made him false to his true self, was accompanied by the deep mental anguish audible in his cries for God's pardon for having denied him and the Lord Jesus. It was a sad fall for such a hero; but all men's nerves are not equally proof to bodily torture. At length, after two days of fruitless questioning, the death-warrant was issued on 22nd May, against Jerome and his two disciples, Dominic and Sylvester. Of mere death, however, the sensitive enthusiast had no fears. That night was spent by him in prayer and fasting. Next day, clad only in woollen shirts, the

three were led barefooted to the place of doom. Savonarola was the last to come under the hangman's care. Wrapt in his own blissful thoughts, he looked for one moment on the sea of unfriendly faces below him, and died without a word. The three bodies were then consigned as they hung to the flames prepared for them at the gallows' foot. The grief of a faithful few was drowned in the dreadful shouts and laughter of a raging multitude. The victims' ashes were then thrown into the Arno, but love and superstition managed to discover relics enow of the martyred saint.

Thus, in his forty-sixth year, died one of the noblest heroes of a race conspicuous for heroic names. A saint of unrivalled purity, a patriot of the most unselfish aims, he fell, in fact, a prey to the fierce resentments of an evil Pope and a corrupt priesthood against him who dared, in the character of an orthodox churchman, to denounce their worldly practices and far from Christian lives. His very nobleness proved his bane; a wicked and perverse generation could not bear the crushing satire embodied in a life so pure, in a faith so deeply grounded. The reform he aimed at was of the heart alone; Rome's religion was good enough for the world, if men would only act up to the doctrine they professed to hold. He would have had them prove their Christianity by leading, as far as they could, the life of Christ. To her own deep disgrace, the Church of Rome slew one of her most loyal

champions; a Christian bishop hunted to his death one of those saintly few, whose lives stand out as landmarks in the history of our common Christendom. For, after all deductions, Christians of whatever sect or country may well be proud of such a man. It matters not that his visions were hysteric, rather than supernatural; that some of his prophecies turned out false; that he believed in dogmas spurned by a Wickliffe or a Luther; that he showed himself weak at last, under the torture which he would have brought to bear against men convicted of certain crimes. Yet these and such like flaws are but the shadow to his many and great virtues. A more unselfish patriot never fell a prey to popular ingratitude. A more earnest-minded reformer never paid the penalty for over-taxing his brethren's weakness. Nor need we grudge him our reverent sympathies because, to all seeming, he failed at last. In spite of the new gospel that might makes right, let us rather think of him as we think of the like-minded hero, whose failure at Aspromonte rendered him all the dearer to the hearts of true patriots in every country, where his deeds have hitherto been made known.

BACON AND HIS NEW APOLOGIST.

If Mr. Dixon's Life of England's foremost philosopher had been written with less ambition and more discernment, his unwearied industry and high enthusiasm would have insured him a far richer harvest of praise and sympathy than he is likely to reap, as things are, from careful readers of this or any future age. The interest of his subject, and the fresh stores opened for his use in records public and private, seemed as sunshine and warm rain to forward the work he had set himself to do. In spite of Pope's neat satire, of Macaulay's impassioned rhetoric, of Lord Campbell's quiet plain-speaking, many a warm English heart yearned hopefully towards the new champion who, undaunted by the defeat of former work-fellows, essayed once more, with heart and soul, to raise up a fallen idol from the gathered dust and filth of bygone ages; once more to rescue from undying infamy the character of that Francis Bacon whose name, in the eyes of most Englishmen, stands greatly first among the heroes of modern science. Charmed by the close

yet graceful wit of an Essay on Truth or Friendship; awed by the daring wisdom and pregnant imagery of the *De Augmentis* or the *Novum Organum;* dazzled by accounts of the great orator who "commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion;"* of the philosophic lawyer whose plans of reform have even yet to be thoroughly carried out; few of us probably cared to measure the dark spots on so bright a genius, or in the wisest agreed also to acknowledge "the meanest of mankind." If it be good for us all to revise, from time to time, our individual judgments on particular things or persons, it seems no less our national duty to grant, on fit occasions, and cause duly shown, a new inquest on the doings of those famous dead, whose memory for good or evil the muse of history cannot willingly let die. Worse characters and smaller stars than Bacon have repeatedly been set before us in newer, if not always truer lights. To him who can tell us aught of new in favour of an Elizabeth, a Cromwell, or a Bacon, we are ready to hearken not only without impatience, but rather with a secret hope of finding cause to amend, if not entirely to recast, our old conclusions.

How little of that hope has in this case been realized it is our painful, yet not wholly bootless, task to show. Mr. Dixon's way of telling his story

* With all deference to Macaulay, Ben Jonson here used the word "judges" where we should talk of "critics."

is likely enough to mislead many who have partially forgotten, or, it may be, have yet to read, the Life of Bacon by Lord Campbell, or Macaulay's powerful reply to the sentimental pleadings of Mr. Basil Montagu. Nor has he wholly failed to rub off one or two of the deepest shades in his idol's countenance, to bring out, in clearer relief, one or two of the fairer features in the life of one to whom Pope's much-quoted antithesis must after all be applied, with large allowance for the needs of a rhyming satirist, and the lameness of human speech. Yet, after a close comparison of opposite pleas, we are forced regretfully to say, that Bacon's new biographer has not only failed to disprove the general truth of charges hitherto current about his hero, but has also succeeded in showing how easily, in the hands of a skilful partisan, the worse may be made to appear the better cause. If his opponents have sometimes erred through ignorance or love of display, his own errors in the other direction are at once more glaring and much less excusable. Compared with Mr. Dixon, Lord Campbell writes with the calmness of a judge, Lord Macaulay with the courtesy of a generous foe.

The book, like many more in these days, is written throughout at far too high a pressure. Its style is utterly unnatural, laden with forced metaphor and graphic writing of the loudest sort. The unsparing use of wrong tenses on every occasion—a fashion copied, for no good reason, from the

French—renders the reading of it a work of pain, not always lightened by the new scenes to which our gaze is drawn. A burst of extremely fine writing, in very short sentences, prepares us for the flood of new light wherein all Bacon's supposed offences are to be drowned for evermore. In the midst of a furious attack on poor Pope, and the "age that took Voltaire to be its guide," we are told that the young and pure reject satire, "for satire is the disease of art;" that "Nature abhors antithesis," and refuses to mix God and devil in one. What Thackeray and other moralists would say to this we need not care to ask, remembering for our part, how history and Byron have painted for us at least one—

"Great lord of all things, yet the slave of all;"

while many a schoolboy might easily enlarge on the pleasure he has derived from reading the "Frogs" of Aristophanes, or the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. Gazing on the girl-like face in Hilyard's miniature, who that judges "by wholes and not by parts" will care to think of that other girl-like face, whose owner, the pure and virtuous Shelley, coolly abandoned a fair young wife to gratify the lawless love he had suddenly conceived for another? Lovers of truth and fair play will be pleased to hear that "the lie against Nature" which "broke into high literary force with Pope," had theretofore "only oozed in the slime of Welden, Chamberlain, and D'Ewes;"

while persons of ordinary shrewdness will, doubtless, be at no loss to understand how, "if it be true that the Father of Modern Science was a rogue and cheat, it is also most true that we have taken a rogue and cheat to be our god."

After some wild hitting at every one who has ever cast the faintest slur on Bacon's fair fame, Mr. Dixon takes up the scent of what future ages are to consider the only true reading of a character hitherto more or less belied. How was it, he asks, that a man of such eminent parts—so wise, witty, eloquent, hard-working, eager to rise, and conscious of power to rule—a man of so many personal charms, so formed for love, for friendship, for social intercourse—how was it that such a man, backed as he was by powerful kinsmen, a queen's favourite, and the queen herself, was still left so far behind in the race of preferment, by men of far lower birth and claims—by men whom he had been used to beat in debate and energy, in natural genius and acquired knowledge—sometimes, even, in all the lesser graces of person and manner? To this question Mr. Dixon finds but one answer. Bacon lagged behind not because he had less luck, less influence, more jealous rivals, than other men; not because the younger Cecil feared his genius, or Queen Elizabeth mistrusted his loyalty, or her successor resented the part he took against Essex; but because he was the soul of honour, the mould of all virtue, the one star of

spotless purity, unflinching patriotism, large-hearted tolerance, in a world of intriguing libertines, self-seeking placemen, and grovelling bargainers for place. In support of this theory we are asked yet another question. If Bacon was corrupt and servile, how was it that "he alone, among the great lawyers of his time, died poor?" Hatton, we are told—

"Left a prince's wealth. Egerton founded the noble house of Ellesmere. Montagu, that of Manchester. Coke was one of the richest men in England. Popham bequeathed to his children Littlecote and Wellington. Bennet, Hobart, Fleming, each left a great estate. How explain this rule and this exception?

"Surely they are not explained by the theory that Bacon's servility held him down, while Coke's servility sent him up; that Bacon's corruption kept him poor, while Popham's corruption made him rich!"

No sane person, we are bold to say, ever thought of thus explaining a contrast intelligible enough to those who remember that Coke, for instance, was as great a miser as Bacon himself was always the reverse; that Lord Ellesmere's reign as Chancellor alone lasted over some twenty years of a long and blameless public life; while Bacon's whole career, from the day he became Solicitor-General to the day he was forced to yield up the Great Seal, barely exceeded fourteen years. Whatever may be said of Popham's corruption, servility was never before laid to the charge of Coke. But the counter-theory hinted, if not openly declared, by Bacon's new champion, is not less wonderfully

absurd than that invented by him for the other side. Bacon died poor, he seems to say; therefore Bacon lived the life of an honest, unselfish, upright man!

How far the notion of Bacon's surpassing virtue is borne out by facts old or new, we shall now go on to examine, striving at least to better Mr. Dixon's mode of enforcing the principle that human character should be judged not by parts, but as a whole. For his attempt to shape out the perfect star so long veiled from our grosser eyes can only be likened to muddy wine that looks clear as it stands in coloured glasses, or to a paltry landscape disguised by the dim uncertain moonlight with a beauty not its own. Of the "broad facts" which he prides himself on handling, some are lost or clouded in a haze of unmeaning rhetoric, others are simply washed out or slurred over as if they were too small to take up an honest painter's time. Very few, on careful inspection, are found to suggest new meanings for what was erewhile dark or unsuspected. Objecting to "a mere smudge of black and white," he has painted a picture all light and poetic loveliness, but as little true to what it aims to be as a drawing by Richardson is true to any particular spot on this earth.

Of Bacon's boyhood, his life at Cambridge, his three years' residence abroad in the train of Sir Amias Paulett, "among the dames and courtiers" of a most voluptuous court, less is told us than we

knew before. By nature refined, peaceful, prudent; weakly, perhaps, in frame, and sensuous—not sensual—in his tastes, he made more friends than foes, kept clear of wine, women, and brawls, and gave early proofs of that studious intellect which was afterwards to "take all nature for its province." His father, the great Lord Keeper, of whom Mr. Dixon has nothing to say, died whilst his youngest son was still eighteen, leaving his land and most of his goods to the family of his first wife. With small means, and little countenance from his powerful kinsmen, young Francis entered on his up-hill fight against the world as a student of law at Gray's Inn. For many years of his life, perhaps the worst thorns in Bacon's side were the two Cecils, father and son. The old Lord Treasurer, Burleigh, would give no opening in the public service to a nephew whose parts and ambition might breed a dangerous rival to his own less brilliant son. Nor when Bacon, a few years later, sought his uncle's help to push him at the Bar, did the testy old nobleman meet his prayer with aught more promising than a snub for his overweening arrogance. This fact, mentioned as it is by Lord Campbell, may possibly have escaped the notice of Mr. Dixon, whose rash assertion, that "Bacon, at least, never dreams that his uncle plays him false," is further belied by Bacon's own avowal in a letter written years after, that "in the time of the Cecils, the father and the son, able men were by design and of purpose suppressed." Whether the uncle was a

secret or open enemy, matters little in face of the known results on the life of one whom a single word from the late Lord Keeper's ancient colleague, and sometime brother-in-law, would have set far on the road to that distinction for which he hungered, hoped, entreated, fawned, and wheedled so many years in vain. Without Lord Burleigh's sanction, the younger Cecil's known dislike and fear of his cousin would never have had power to keep the rising young barrister from winning his way into the highest graces of a sovereign not usually blind to merit such as his, a sovereign who had petted him as a boy, and whose genuine liking for the company of a courtier so wise, eloquent, handsome, and accomplished, neither the ill-will of others, nor even his own unlucky speeches in Parliament, availed wholly to undermine.

Bacon, however, did make some way alone. Called to the Outer Bar at twenty-five, and soon after made a Bencher of Gray's Inn, he was chosen two years later to fill the honourable post of Lent Reader. Meanwhile he had already sat and voted on committees in the House of Commons, first as member for Melcombe, in 1585, and again, in 1586, for the large and noteworthy borough of Taunton, "that Manchester," says Mr. Dixon, "of a milder clime; next to Bristol, the richest town between the Severn and the Scilly Isles." Instead of making his maiden speech on a point of law-reform, as Lord Campbell fondly fancied, in the Parliament of 1593,

he had, by Mr. Dixon's showing, played no silent part in the session summoned by Elizabeth to settle the fate of Mary Queen of Scots. A grand committee, of which Bacon was a member, knelt down at the royal feet to demand that the murderess of Darnley, the archplotter against England's Queen, faith, and freedom, should be dealt with as her crimes deserved. The member for Taunton had already proved his powers of speech and brain before an assembly remarkable for the number of its able or brilliant men. Mr. Dixon, indeed, has no measure for his admiration of the peerless orator, the large-minded statesman, the bold yet tolerant patriot, who is trusted by all parties because "he represents what is best in each." Unluckily, in the very next page, the same enthusiast discovers "a bloom of study and travel on the fat girlish face," in Hilyard's miniature of his youthful hero! Bacon may possibly have been all that he is thus painted, but where are the proofs?

Through whose interest he first found room in a senate graced by such stars as Egerton, Walsingham, Sydney, Raleigh, Drake, and others of little less brightness, no one has yet cared to point out; nor has even his last biographer remarked the possible connection between his earlier successes in Parliament and his growing influence among the benchers of Gray's Inn. His election to the Readership must have followed on the heels of his election for Liverpool in 1588, the year which beheld the great

Armada riding gloriously up the British Channel, only to leave its proudest trophies among the rocks and sailors of our northern seas. In the following session Bacon seems to have spoken well, and to some purpose, on the question of subsidies, his amendments being in part accepted by a Queen who never yielded a point that might be safe or profitable to retain. In the matter of purveyances, however, the proud old lady refused to give way an inch, and scolded her faithful Commons for daring to meddle with her own especial concerns. Having got her subsidies, she had no further need of Parliaments until the time should come for demanding more. Bacon returned to his studies and speculations, to the pursuit of clients who came but slowly, and of that philosophy which might enrich the world, but could not help him to win his daily bread.

All this time he kept beseeching his uncle to help him forward in the world, and with a meekness remarkable even in those days, repeatedly kissed the rod that had just been smiting him. At length his importunity so far prevailed, that in 1590 he was appointed Queen's Counsel extraordinary, with a salary almost nominal, but the advantage of a sounding title and easier access to the Queen. Mr. Dixon, indeed, defers the appointment five years, ignoring, on no apparent grounds, the evidence of letters written by Bacon some time before, and sufficiently quoted by Lord Campbell. In a letter

to Burleigh, dated 1594, the young barrister, having touched on Her Majesty's kindness, through which "I may with more ease practise the law," still begs his uncle to get him another kind of place, more favourable to "the poor talent that God hath given me." To stop his mouth on one of these occasions, the Lord Treasurer got him a reversion to the Registrarship of the Star Chamber, a post of great value when it fell to him twenty years after, but seeming at the time, as he remarked in jocular earnest, "like another man's fair ground battening upon his house, which might mend his prospects, but did not fill his barns." Deeply as he had now gone into those legal studies, which his poverty urged and his better health enabled him to carry on, he never took kindly to the profession of law, never ceased hankering after some quicker mode of raising his worldly outlooks to a level with his natural tastes and intellectual yearnings. Great as his legal learning may have been, yet, as a practising lawyer, he never seems to have made much way; and his noble impatience of hard technicalities and prosaic drudgery, may have lent a colour to the reports which Cecil spread and Elizabeth believed, that his speculative habits rendered him an unsafe though brilliant guide whether in the field of law or public business.

Meanwhile his brother Antony returns in broken health from travels abroad, to lodge with Francis at Gray's Inn. For this brother and the "Saint of

God," as he calls their common mother, the Lady Ann, Bacon's love was true, and perhaps strong, by comparison, at least, with his feelings towards any one else. For his nature, less warm than kindly, was ever swayed by that strong self-love which, in spite of his eulogists, probably thwarted his attempts to rise, as it certainly deepened the shamefulness of his fall. Into the lives of these three we get some further glimpses in the new letters published by Mr. Dixon. Those of Francis are seldom readable for their own sake, being wordy, dull, and sometimes strangely confused; but good Lady Ann writes like a true mother and a clear-headed, pious, accomplished gentlewoman, mixing sound advice about her sons' health and worldly doings, with fond prayers for their ghostly weal, simple gossip about homely matters or mutual friends, and frequent announcements of ale-brewing, or pigeons sent off from Gorhambury to cheer the young folk in town. Her letters are nearly all addressed to Antony, the elder and more delicate son, who lives to see neither the height of his brother's greatness nor the depth of his disgrace. Some of them touch on the embarrassments into which young men with little money and expensive ways are not seldom prone to fall. The two brothers are often obliged to borrow from Jews and Lombards the means of living in a style befitting the friends of young Lord Essex, and the attendants on a brilliant Court. Bills are renewed at fatal interest, and once the Queen's Counsel

spends some days in a vile spunging-house — a misfortune about which his new biographer has somehow forgotten to say one word, although the rough-tongued Coke made it the subject of some rude jesting in a quarrel he afterwards had with Bacon in open court.

In 1593 Bacon sat for Middlesex—a fact which seems to certify the footing he had already gained both abroad and in the House. When Parliament met in February, war and pestilence were frowning on the country. Elizabeth wanted money, and haughtily forbade the Commons to handle any other question than that of subsidies, or to enact any laws, save for the maintenance of religious uniformity. For neglecting her orders, Wentworth was sent to the Tower, and Sir Thomas Bromley to the Fleet. Bacon, however, took courage to speak in behalf of law-reform, and to oppose the Court in the manner of granting subsidies. In words of unusual boldness and eloquence not often surpassed, he enforced the right of the Commons to lead the way in voting grants of money, and demanded longer time for paying the heavy subsidies wanted by the Crown. A large majority declined all further conference with the Lords. For once, the Court had been signally defeated by one of its ablest champions; by one, whose sympathy with a suffering people was only outdone by his ardent worship of an imperious Queen. Raleigh's address, however, compromised the point of form, while threatening

messages from Elizabeth silenced all further antagonism to claims enhanced not more by the general feeling, than by the needs of a very troublous time. The subsidies asked by Cecil were duly voted, although, according to Mr. Dixon, the time for paying them was extended from three years to four.

Of Bacon's public conduct at this time, Mr. Dixon has not put before us that full and fair statement which every unbiassed reader would have liked to see. His eloquence and wisdom are well and wittily attested in the praises of Raleigh and Ben Jonson. For general patriotism, we may give him all the credit that a young man of his birth and breeding, eager to rise and sore at the unkindness of his powerful kinsman, might deserve. His bold stand against courtly dictation, and the encroachments of a servile Upper House, may have been made from the noblest and purest motives; but what shall we say about the abject earnestness of his pleadings to Burleigh and Puckering, in mitigation of Her Majesty's high displeasure? Why has Mr. Dixon refrained from citing the letters hitherto deemed so censurable, and how is it that he does not tell us on which side his hero voted in another question of that year—a question involving the direst penalties against all who abstained from the public worship of the Church of England? And whatever he may have been in those early days, this book still leaves it but too clear that his eloquence was afterwards

employed chiefly in the maintenance of those abuses which a true patriot and a sound philosopher should have been the foremost to assail. People who judge of character by the whole, and not by parts, are slow to forget that the same man, who in his youth declaimed so strongly against the system of royal purveyance; who drew so touching a picture of the suffering caused by over-taxation, and the turning of corn fields into gentlemen's parks, could yet, in after days, exhort the Commons to vote King James a larger amount of subsidies than Queen Elizabeth had ever received, could defend his sovereign's claim to benevolences already denounced as illegal, and encourage him to renew monopolies more shameful than any for which Raleigh or Essex had sometimes sued in vain.

In April of the following year, Coke, late Speaker of the House of Commons, became Attorney-General. Of all the candidates for the vacant Solicitorship, Bacon was commonly allowed to have the fairest claims. Burleigh talked of naming him to the Queen; Egerton, now Master of the Rolls, spoke warmly in his behalf; Essex pleaded his cause in season and out of season with the zeal of a true friend and the assurance of a favourite courtier. He himself, while the choice was pending, seems to have spared no pains to impress on all concerned the great public benefit to which his own election might lead. But either Burleigh was treacherous, or the Queen had not forgotten his unlucky boldness

against her the year before. On that point, indeed, we have the clearest evidence, not furnished by Mr. Dixon, that her proud spirit was very sore. It is also tolerably certain, that in matters of state the Lord Treasurer had more than any one else of her private ear. To suppose with Mr. Dixon, that Bacon's chance was spoiled by the impetuous zeal of his friend Essex, is merely to stir again the dust which Robert Cecil scattered in the eyes of his luckless cousin. Bacon's claim was so strong before the world, that the secret promise beforehand, which was all that Essex prayed for, might safely have been granted him without any one imputing his friend's promotion to his great interest alone. To us, it seems undoubted that Elizabeth had not forgiven the rebellious member for Middlesex; while Burleigh himself either could not, or would not, counteract the efforts of his crafty son to keep so dangerous a kinsman out of his own water. Had the Queen been really minded to do the son of her old Lord Keeper a friendly turn, she would have scorned to throw him over on the plea that an act of timely justice might be misinterpreted by the world at large.

As a salve for Bacon's wounded pride and crushed hopes, he received from the Crown a grant of Zelwood Forest, a small estate in Somersetshire; and the reversion of the lease of Twickenham Park. With a noble delicacy, for the first time disparaged by Mr. Dixon, Essex also pressed on his luckless

friend the gift of some land at Twickenham, afterwards sold for £1,800, a sum then worth at least four times its present value. It was given, not as we are now asked to believe, in payment of work done, but avowedly as a poor atonement for the harm which he fancied Bacon might have received from his connection with a courtier whose star was already on the wane. It is a pity that writers in search of truth should turn away like owls from the broad light of patent facts. If Bacon's character can only be mended by patches taken from other men's clothing, in the name of Justice, let Bacon's character go! Poor Essex at least had sins enough to answer for, without being robbed of all redeeming traits. In his whole statement of the case between Bacon and his noble friend, Mr. Dixon shows himself utterly and widely at fault. No one who studies it fairly can doubt that the former had long been something more than man of business to the latter. All the letters which Mr. Dixon has published, as well as those for which we must still go to Lord Campbell, prove that Francis and Antony were both trusty secretaries, and intimate friends of the loving, generous, hot-headed Earl. Their mother writes of him and his Countess in terms of friendly, if not familiar meaning. In 1596, he himself, though starting in quest of new triumphs over the Spaniard, beseeches Egerton the new Lord Keeper, and other powerful friends, to further at once his own and the public interests, by getting Bacon the vacant Master-

ship of the Rolls. And at Bacon's own request, Essex leaves with him letters to Sir Thomas and Lady Cecil, earnestly commending, as only a warm friend could do, Bacon's suit for the hand of his beautiful cousin, the young and wealthy widow of Sir William Hatton.

Arguing by outward signs, by Bacon's growing debts, his grief at Her Majesty's cruel treatment of one so loyal, his restless craving for some post of honour and high pay, Lord Campbell regards this wooing as one of pure self-interest. Mr. Dixon gainsays with a sneer, but proceeds to show how little can be said on the other side. Instead of breaking his heart for the fair termagant, whose runaway marriage with Sir Edward Coke his defeated rivals had afterwards small reason to regret, Bacon busied himself in composing a "Treatise on Law," in publishing the first edition of his "Essays," in regaining Her Majesty's goodwill through the same channel by which he had lost it. As Member for Ipswich in 1597, he used his eloquence to obtain from the Commons as large a grant as that he had erewhile urged them to withhold. Another motion made by himself, and carried after a fruitless struggle in the Lords—a motion for reclaiming to its former uses all land turned into pasture since the Queen's accession—seems to have won him equal favour from the people and the Crown, the royal grant of a fair estate about Cheltenham following close on his parliamentary triumph.

Bacon's star was now steadily rising, while that of Essex began to wane. The Queen smiled more and more on the enemies and rivals of the high-mettled, warm-hearted, young Earl-Marshal. Caring only to retain her good graces, he prayed for leave to command the troops which should bring rebellious Ireland on her knees. Against the advice, it seems, of Bacon and other wise men, and to the joy of Raleigh, Cecil, and their friends, he set off on an enterprise fatal in the end to his fame as a soldier, and to the charm he still wielded over the heart of his royal mistress. Mr. Dixon attempts to prove that the hero of Cadiz, the Commander-in-Chief at the Azores, the sturdiest champion of Dutch freedom, the most popular of English noblemen, the manliest of royal favourites, the friend of Bacon, Mountjoy, Vere, Southampton, beloved by men of all classes, creeds, and professions, had already begun to plot the darkest treason against Queen and kingdom, when he led his weary, ill-trained, downhearted troops against the redoubtable O'Neill. The truce he was fain to grant the rebel leader, and his sudden return to Court alone and against orders, in the hope of cooling his sovereign's anger towards one whose enemies were now trying hard to inflame it, are made parts of a settled scheme for sharing Her Majesty's Crown between the English and the Irish Earl. His attempts to counteract the rivalry of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the secret enmity of Sir Robert Cecil, who was quietly stepping into the room of

his dead father, are now turned into proofs of wickedness wholly at variance with all we have hitherto seen of a nature peculiarly frank and lovable. All this, founded on documents in the State Paper Office, none but Cecil himself seems to have known or guessed at the time. Of what worth confessions forced from the pain of tortures or the hope of reward may be, we have the less need to inquire, seeing that Bacon, in common with the world at large, saw nothing in this part of his patron's career but acts of doubtful generalship and foolish disobedience to a royal command. That which all of us are most concerned to know is, how far Bacon was justified in playing the part he did; first, on the trial of Essex before the Privy Council; afterwards, on the prosecution of his unhappy friend for the mad outbreak which brought him to the scaffold.

By Bacon's own account, he not only pleaded with the Queen in behalf of Essex, but induced her to give up the purpose of trying her old favourite in the Star Chamber. Yet, in a letter to Elizabeth, he hedges a faint request for exemption from any share in the actual inquiry by a strong assurance of his readiness to obey the Queen before all other duties or desires. If at one moment he shows her letters written by himself in his friend's name, at another he objects to the trifling part assigned to himself in this business by those who considered—if he did not—"how I stood to my Lord of Essex."

And if after all he was bound to obey Her Majesty, are we to excuse the harshness with which he bettered his instructions by ascribing it, as he does himself, "to the superior duty I owed to the Queen's fame and honour in a public proceeding, *and partly to the intention I had to uphold myself in credit and strength with the Queen, the better to be able to do my Lord good offices afterwards.*" Such reasons, so quietly given, betray at least the writer's happy ignorance of having done aught worthy of blame or question from honourable men.

In this matter we get small help from his new biographer. As Mr. Dixon had just been making the worst possible case against the Earl, so now he can only tell us of Bacon's heroic friendship and Elizabeth's troubled dreams; how "tongues whisper to the Queen" that Shakspere's new play of "Richard II." is "part of a great plot to teach her subjects how to murder kings;" how one John Hayward had dedicated to Essex a seditious tract, wherein Bacon read "not treason, but felony;" no crime against the laws, but a wholesale "theft from Tacitus;" how Bacon besieged the royal heart with a sonnet on mercy of his own making, or tried to coax it into a gentler mood with a bundle of those figurative conceits which every gentleman of his day kept ready for constant use. Here, as indeed throughout the book, there is no lack of windy rhetoric and picturesque impertinence. But to see

all that Bacon really said and did, we must still go back to Hume or Lord Campbell.

At this period he seems, on the whole, to have gone as far in behalf of Essex as his fear of harming his own prospects would let him go in behalf of any one. Perhaps he knew, better than Mr. Dixon, that the true offence was *not* treason, and trusted that the royal favour would speedily shine once more on a culprit whose sentence, though seemingly hard, could at any moment be waived by a single word from the Queen. Essex was suspended from all his offices and kept a prisoner in his own house during the queenly pleasure. But from one cause and another the expected pardon never came. "The ungovernable beast," as Elizabeth had called him, was stinted in his provender so long that he did at length become quite ungovernable. Rash things said and reported to the Queen widened the breach between them more and more. She began to look coldly on Bacon himself. He rushed off to put himself right with her. After a passionate appeal on his part, answered by "sensible and tender words" on hers, he went away "determined to meddle no more in the matter, as that, I saw, would overthrow me, and not be able to do him any good."

With this bold, unselfish resolve in his heart, the friend of Essex leaves the poor young Earl to his own devices and the company of men who gladly use him as a tool for their own ends. Ere many

weeks are over Essex, mad with despair and drunk with his new Puritanism, sallies out to raise the city against those who stand between him and his cruel mistress. Lodged for his pains a prisoner in the Tower, he comes forth to stand his trial for high treason. Once more Bacon's eloquence bears hard against a culprit guilty indeed of overt treason, but, to all seeming, guiltless of the least design against Queen or kingdom. Hume, Macaulay, and Lord Campbell agree in denouncing the share taken in these proceedings by one whose duties as Queen's Counsel could never have sanctioned his complete forgetfulness of the poorest courtesies towards a friend pleading for his life, unaided by other counsel than his own heart, and the advice he had once been offered by Bacon himself. According to Lord Campbell, Bacon's part in replying to the defence should have fallen by rights to the Solicitor-General. Macaulay insists that a Counsel for the Crown is bound to use a just discretion in the case of criminals pleading without counsel. Yet Bacon not only showed no backwardness in exposing his friend's guilt, but even went out of his way to prove it blacker than it really was. The young Earl's reckless scheme for regaining his lost hold upon the Queen was likened to the artful stroke by which Pisistratus gained the means of destroying his country's freedom. The worst construction was placed on the merest trifles; and every plea put forward by Essex in palliation of deeds which he

never sought to deny, was scornfully thrust aside by the very man who had but lately given it shape. Appealing against "these orators who, out of a form and custom of speaking, would throw so much criminal odium upon him," Essex solemnly avowed his innocence "of any disloyal thought or harm to Her Majesty," or of any murderous design against the enemies who had planned his ruin. In answer, Bacon returned to his former charge, and found another parallel to the prisoner's crime in the attempt made by Henry, Duke of Guise, to dethrone his sovereign "on the day of the Barricadoes." To all this Mr. Dixon replies by declaring that Bacon could not help himself; that no one can put him in the wrong without first proving Essex to have done right; that the worst part of the Earl's offences was studiously kept back by the Queen or her advisers; that Lord Campbell, in like circumstances, would have behaved with the like sternness; that to do less than Bacon did "would have been to act like a weak girl, not like a great man."

If Bacon had done a little more for his old friend during those anxious days between his trial and his beheadal, possibly that friend's life might have been spared, and certainly Bacon's character would have fared the better with future ages. Yet he neither, it seems, went near the Tower; nor, when he once had private speech of the Queen, did he venture, by his own admission, "to deal directly for my Lord, as things stood;" satisfying his conscience

with vague talk about the royal mercy, which he likened to "an excellent balm that did continually distil from her sovereign hands, and made an excellent odour in the senses of her people." As if his service to the Queen had not yet driven him far enough beyond the pale of delicate forbearance towards Essex, he gladly allowed himself to be made the mouthpiece of new charges put forth by Cecil and the Queen, in a pamphlet bearing the name of Bacon, and called "A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons of Robert, late Earl of Essex." Even if the facts therein quoted against the dead Earl were a whit better grounded than the charge of secret treason which Essex, on his trial, had brought against Cecil, sure we are that no man of any spirit would have stooped to write as Bacon did, for many times the payment he took in praise and money down, and promises of high preferment on the next vacancy. For although about the tract itself Mr. Dixon has not a word to say, yet with a lover's turn for confounding blemishes with beauties, he dwells exultingly on the twelve hundred pounds awarded to his hero out of the fines levied on some of the late Earl's followers, and begs his readers to fancy Coke's delight in passing an order for that sum to his hated rival, Francis Bacon.

In defence of acts which the many friends of Essex were likely enough to read unfavourably, his late accuser addressed to Lord Mountjoy, in 1603,

that famous "Apology," which, in the eyes of all careful readers, seems to shut the door at once and for ever on our hopes of clearing Bacon from the blame attaching to him for deeds that might after all be construed another way. In that apology we have an unconscious picture of the man himself, drawn in colours which his worst enemy would hardly have dared to use—in colours which make Pope's antithesis—"the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind"—sound almost a literal fact. It is a sad picture of human inconsistency, of intellectual might set off by moral weakness, of bright genius and varied wisdom grovelling at the feet of a base ambition, a paltry concern for self. Never did feet of clay show forth so pitiably beneath the front of brass. Barnes Newcome could not have betrayed more happy ignorance of his own villany than Bacon here betrays of his own selfish meanness. Out of his own mouth we are fain to adjudge him guilty of not feeling that he has done a great wrong to himself, to Essex, to all who, revering the philosopher, would wish also to love the man. Mr. Dixon may try to save his character by blackening that of others; Mr. Montagu may attempt to show that he sought power only to use it for the good of mankind; but the world at large, coupling the facts he himself admits with the reasons he himself alledges, and the remarks he uttered by the way, will sorrowfully endorse the verdict passed upon him by former ages; and by the unconscious irony

of passages like those already quoted, will learn to appreciate the exact amount of truth in Bacon's assertion, that he first courted the young Earl because "he loved his country more than was answerable to his fortune, and held my lord to be the fittest instrument to do good to the State." In the face of such a narrative as this, Bacon's advocates waste their time in trying to prove him more indebted to Elizabeth than to Essex, and in slurring over the question of overt deeds by an appeal to the fact of his being chosen to represent two different places in the Parliament which sat a few months after the Earl's death.

Two years later, there sat on the throne of England a King who knew not Joseph, the stuttering, ungainly, coarse-mannered pedant, James I. Even from a distance Bacon began to worship the rising star. To friends about the King, to the King himself, he wrote letters teeming with the grossest flattery, and the largest offers of humble service for one so worthy to fill the place of his dead mistress. On the King's arrival in London, Bacon, still doubtful of his future and half disposed to betake himself to other pursuits, besought Cecil to get him knighted, because there were "three new knights in his mess at Gray's Inn," and because "he had found out an alderman's daughter, a handsome maiden, to his liking." The wish was granted, though in a way that meant nothing, and, along with three hundred more, he knelt down before

James, to rise up Sir Francis. Having composed a farewell tribute to the late Queen, he attempted to make his peace with the Earl of Southampton, who had shared the treason and narrowly escaped the lot of his friend Essex. The next year he seems to have opened a way to the royal favour by the zeal he showed in Parliament to bring about a union of the two crowns, while on more than one question of public grievances he spoke and voted with the popular party. In the House of Commons so wise and eloquent a speaker was sure to wield no common power for good or evil. Elizabeth was dead, and many a man whose tongue had long been bridled through deference for the woman, or downright dread of the Queen, now began to speak his thoughts out boldly before a monarch whom few respected and none feared. Owing to the influence he now enjoyed, either as a patriot, or, more probably, as an able leader in debate, Bacon's name was mooted, with two or three more, in opposition to the Speaker put forward by the court. As one of the commissioners named by Parliament to discuss the union of the two kingdoms, he strove so zealously to forward an issue so dear to the royal heart, that James's coolness towards the supposed betrayer of his friend Essex began to thaw; and Bacon was at last confirmed in his post of Counsel to the Crown, with a salary of forty pounds a year, and a yearly pension of sixty pounds for special services rendered to the Crown by himself and his

brother Antony, lately dead. Henceforth, in spite of his known antecedents, of Coke's open antagonism, and Cecil's jealous dislike, he continued to improve his footing at court by all those arts which a fruitful wit, a graceful courtesy, and a glozing tongue enabled him to practise on a King remarkable alike for his self-conceit, his openness to flattery, his love of pleasure, and his literary tastes.

Meanwhile, enriched by his brother's death, the new master of Gorhambury had found time to work upon his essay on "The Advancement of Learning," which was given to the world in 1605, and confirmed the opinion already formed of his true greatness as a leader of the new philosophy. In the cry for sweeping vengeance on the Papists which followed the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, it is probable, though not so clear as Mr. Dixon would make it, that Sir Francis, at least, was too enlightened to join. About this time, Cecil, now Earl of Salisbury, began to look out for aid from the cousin to whom he had hitherto behaved so churlishly. The King was in sad want of money, and if Bacon would help him to a handsome grant from the Commons, his rise at the bar should no longer be delayed. Accordingly, in the early session of 1606, after much fierce debating and repeated delays, Bacon seized the moment of a rumoured attack on the life of James, to wheedle his excited hearers into voting twice the amount of subsidies at first

allowed. Once more, as on a like occasion in the latter days of Queen Elizabeth, the rising courtier laid himself open to the sneers of those who had not yet forgotten how touchingly the young and daring Member for Middlesex had painted the cruel effects of large subsidies in his famous speech of 1593.

Flushed with success and the promise of more, Bacon soon after married the fair Alice Barnham, for whom he had owned a liking three years before. That the match was not to all seeming a mercenary one, Mr. Dixon has done much to show. A twelvemonth later, after some trying delays and much unseemly fawning on men in power, Bacon got both feet on the ladder which men of his own standing and far less ability had been mounting before him for the last thirteen years. On the 25th of June, 1607, he was made Solicitor-General, and at once became, by force of his stronger intellect, the King's chief minister in all points of public law. Of his general doings during the next few years Mr. Dixon's book presents a new, if rather overwrought account. He fell foul of Coke by maintaining the jurisdiction of the Court of Wales; he strove more successfully in the law courts than in Parliament to effect a virtual union of the two nations; he tried hard to compromise the dispute between King and Commons, touching royal wardships, and other unseemly shreds of the old feudal times; he lent the influence of his name and purse to the great Virginian Company, who laid the first stone of British

rule in the Far West. Cecil dying in 1612, Bacon found himself free to push his way in a court where Carr alone stood between him and his royal patron. To this rising favourite, already made Earl of Rochester, he sued in vain for the vacant Mastership of the Wards, which he had made so sure of winning as even to order the new clothes for his serving-men. From James himself, however, he had by this time squeezed out a promise—not recorded by Mr. Dixon—that he should "succeed, if he lived, into the Attorney's place, whensoever it should be void." His interest with James, who found him a useful counsellor in affairs of state as well as law, enabled him ere long to contrive the needful vacancy. In the paper of Reasons which Bacon drew up to show his master the great advantage of raising Coke to the King's Bench and himself to the post of Attorney-General Hobart, any one but the blindest partisan would read the fitting sequel to the character revealed in his own "Apology"—would feel himself listening in blank disgust to the advice of a heartless backstair plotter, a fearless worshipper of place and pelf, a statesman who coolly recommends the systematic straining of the royal prerogative, a lawyer who calmly talks of bullying the King's judges into doing their master's pleasure, not the justice they owed his people.

In the autumn of 1613 Sir Francis became Attorney-General in the room of Hobart, promoted

to the Common Pleas. Meanwhile his pen had not been idle. In these latter years he published his "Cogitata et Visa," his "Wisdom of the Ancients," and a third edition of his "Essays," containing, along with many other new pieces, an alleged portrait of the late Earl of Salisbury, in the shape of a short but cutting essay on Deformity. His great work was also "going forward;" and his brain was busy with other schemes,—now for amending the laws, anon for writing a history of his own country during some period more or less recent.

Chosen by three different places for the Parliament of the following year, Bacon took his seat as member for Cambridge, and was allowed to retain it in breach of the rule which disabled a crown lawyer from sitting after his nomination in a Parliament summoned for the first time. The rule thus broken in his favour has never since been enforced; a fact which, however suggestive in other ways, has no more bearing on the question of his political purity than the fact of his influence with the House itself has on the question of his moral worth. Parliament being dissolved, after a stormy and fruitless session, James betook himself, with Bacon's advice, to levying the sum he wanted by means as liable to abuse as they seem to have been unlawful. For protesting loudly against these new "Benevolences," one Oliver St. John was seized, and found guilty of libel in the Star Chamber Court; the new Attorney-General having declaimed his best on the King's behalf, and

quietly forced from judges, removable at pleasure, a quibbling opinion to the same effect.

In the proceedings against a mad old Somersetshire parson, named Peachem, Bacon acted a yet more disgraceful part. Among the papers found in this man's desk by officers of the Archbishop's Court, in which he had been sued for libel against his bishop, was a manuscript full of wild tirades and half-seditious maunderings, which a philosopher like Bacon should have greeted with calm contempt. The King, however, was furious, and Bacon did not care to thwart him. A screw was put upon the judges of the King's Bench, Bacon's juniors taking each his man, while Bacon himself worked "in some dark manner" on the self-willed and long reluctant Chief-Justice Coke. Pending their decision, poor Peachem was put to the "question"—in other words, upon the rack. Many years before that time the practice of torturing prisoners had been loudly condemned, and even in the days of Lord Burleigh had fallen into general disuse. An order against it had actually been issued by Queen Elizabeth herself. Only a few years after Peachem's trial it was decided that the murderer of Buckingham could not lawfully be put to the question. All men of average culture joined with Coke in denouncing a practice not more barbarous than illegal—a practice of which Bacon himself professed to disapprove. Yet of such a practice, in a case too paltry to lend it the slightest shadow of an excuse, Bacon seems, by his own

showing, to have been the foremost, if not the only advocate besides James himself. His letter to the man for whose sake he thus outraged his own better self, complains of others hanging back from a business which he himself is trustful of bringing to a good issue. Having failed to frighten the prisoner by a show of preparing him for the torture, he stood by while the poor wretch was undergoing his sharp trial, and plied him with questions between each turn of the rack. Conduct of this sort Mr. Dixon defends by pleading Bacon's duty to the King, by lessening his actual share of blame, and by asking whether people, a hundred years hence, will denounce Lord Campbell as a murderer, because, at a time when capital punishment was still the rule, he passed sentence of death on all criminals convicted of murder by a jury of their countrymen in open court. Bacon's case must be hopeless, indeed, when such a parallel can be seriously suggested by a writer ready enough to find a flaw in his opponent's reasoning. Any reader of average shrewdness can rend his argument to pieces without our help. Nor is it possible to justify Bacon's previous tampering with the judges, by alledging that others before him had done the same. Precedents for wrong-doing will never wipe out the wrong done; and no amount of cases like that of the heretic whom James had burnt for heresy in the teeth of a statute passed in the former reign, can weigh for one moment against Chief-Justice Coke's repeated assertion, that "such

auricular taking of opinions was not according to the custom of this realm."

Coke's refusal to pronounce beforehand on a case which he might afterwards be called to try, having at length been overborne, and the prisoner duly racked out of his small wits, a verdict of high treason was found against him at Taunton by a jury who, according to Mr. Dixon himself, judged his public conduct not on the facts before them, but rather "by what they knew of his private character." Reprieved from death, on what grounds we do not certainly know, the wretched man was allowed to linger in gaol until death in another form came to release him from further suffering.

Grown into much favour with the King, Sir Francis turned from the King's first favourite, Carr, Earl of Somerset, to court another youth in whom he had the wisdom to foresee the Earl's approaching supplanter. As he had once clung to Essex, so he now began clinging to Sir George Villiers, whose character, in some points resembling, was, on the whole, as inferior to that of Bacon's first patron, as the character of James himself was to that of Queen Elizabeth. On this young, handsome, heartless minion of a grossly sensual King, he had already lavished his softest courtesies and some well-written advice, which neither Villiers nor himself cared much to follow. The same man who had warned his young pupil to suspect him who sued to be made a judge, and utterly to scout him

who should bargain for a judgeship, was now begging and bargaining with all his might and skill for the highest judgeship in the land, the post which his friend Lord Chancellor Ellesmere had filled so worthily for some twenty years past. Sniffing a vacancy from afar in the growing illness of that friend, he made the King a free offering of his heart, his service, his place of attorney which he held to be "honestly worth" £6,000 a-year, and his place in the Star-Chamber, worth £1,600, if not a great deal more, if only James would promise to make his poor suppliant the next Lord Chancellor. There was but one man, he broadly hinted, for such a post. Coke, for instance, was too popular, too headstrong; my Lord Hobart lacked statesmanship; my Lord of Canterbury had enough to do with his spiritual affairs. Time pressed, and Lord Ellesmere was very like to die. Only let His Majesty name his attorney for the seals, and he would be raising an honest man, a sound statesman, an able and zealous servant who would do all his master's work, take jealous care of his prerogative, keep his judges to their allegiance, and use his own great parliamentary influence to "rectify" an assembly on whose conduct so much would be at stake. On Lord Ellesmere's sudden amendment and seeming slowness to give up his place, Bacon, in a letter to Villiers, renewed a former motion of his touching a seat in the Privy Council. The King gave him the choice between a promise of the Great Seal and

his appointment as Privy Councillor. Bacon at once accepted the smaller bait, with an avowed intention to keep his eye on the larger.

This new preferment followed, and was doubtless owing to the service he had done the King on the famous trial of Somerset and his wicked countess for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. While the lesser criminals in that dark business were sacrificed to the popular feeling, the countess was allowed to avoid exposure by throwing herself on the royal mercy; and with regard to Somerset, who denied his guilt, Bacon had promised to charge him so lightly as to ensure his escape from the punishment which, if guilty, he deserved as much as that Lord Sanquhair for whose life Bacon had not been recommended to plead. It is almost needless to add, that here, as in other doubtful passages of Bacon's life, his new biographer has drawn an ideal hero, an English Bayard of the gown, who, while Coke was crying like an ogre for more blood, cared only to deal out justice largely tempered with mercy; whose soul was filled with a divine compassion for the most shameless woman of her day, a culprit whose crime outshadowed that of a vulgar murderess as far as her rank in life outtopped that of her tool and scapegoat, Mrs. Turner.

The calm flow of Bacon's wedded life seems to have been ruffled now and then by squabbles with his mother-in-law, the alderman's widow, the present wife of rich, generous, stubborn Sir John

Pakington. Her evil temper makes mischief wherever she goes; inflames the natural heat of her husband's wrath; rouses Bacon himself into an attitude of unwonted sternness, even to a denial of his further acquaintance until she falls into a better mood. Had Mr. Dixon treated us to a few more details of this kind, written in a less affected style, his book would have been more amusing and a good deal less absurd.

On the ruins of Somerset's party Villiers at once rose high. If his personal graces had first won the King, his skilful flattery and determined tact had since secured him—as Mr. Langton Sanford has lately shown—as thorough a mastery of the weak, haughty, shy, secretive Prince Charles. In him, at this time, Bacon also had gotten such a friend as he was likely or deserved to find in a courtier so cold, selfish, and cumbered with needy kin. To the King himself his faithful attorney enlarged on the noble qualities of such a favourite; the favourite he amused with jokes and stories about their common enemy, the Chief Justice. Coke's turn of suffering was now come, and Bacon had no fine scruples about trampling on a fallen foe. The Chief Justice had offended the King by refusing to stay a private cause at his command. Villiers owed him a grudge for declining to appoint one of the favourite's men to an office in his own gift. Bacon himself had a long score to settle for the insults and injuries, real or fancied, of many former years. On the poorest,

flimsiest pretexts ever used by triumphant malice, the best lawyer and boldest judge of his day was turned out of the Privy Council, and suspended from his public duties until he should have revised the "novelties, errors, and offensive conceits" which his Law Reports were now discovered to contain. The disgraced old man soon after received from Bacon a written expostulation, which, utterly as Mr. Dixon has ignored it, seems but to cast a thin veil of quiet warning and Christian-like reproof over the concentrated meanness of a spirit burning to wound, yet never daring to strike until the hour for striking fairly had passed away. "Under pretence," says Lord Campbell, "of acting a Christian part, Bacon pours oil of vitriol into the wounds he had inflicted." But another shaft has yet to come from the same quiver. If Coke was to be spared the shame of a public trial, and the burden of a ruinous fine, he must still be removed from his judgeship. Writing to James, the Attorney-General as good as tells him, that neither himself nor his fellow-councillors will take it much to heart, should His Majesty still continue to think Coke "not fit for his service." What is this but another version of the gentleman's request to his friends, not to duck a certain obnoxious visitor in the nearest pond?

In due time the needful warrant went to the Lord Chancellor for a writ to create a new Chief Justice in the room of Coke, dismissed. Bacon, on the other hand, to his many rich gleanings now

added the post of Chancellor to the Duchy of Cornwall. A few months later, on the 7th of March, 1617, he received from the King, on bended knees, the Great Seal, for which he had bartered all that a true philosopher, a thorough patriot, and an honest gentleman, would rather have died than give away. Overflowing with satisfied joy, he went home to write Villiers, then Earl of Buckingham, a letter of humbly rapturous thanks for this crowning proof of his firm and generous friendship. Mr. Dixon, however, will have it that Bacon was made Chancellor by James alone, while Buckingham was actually bargaining for the sale of that office to another man. If this were as true as it sounds false to us, *the new Lord Keeper* was either a most accomplished hypocrite, or a most shallow-witted dupe: two characters between which we leave his advocates to choose at leisure.

Installed on the first day of Easter Term with much lordly show and popular shouting, Bacon buckled to his work with a zeal answering to the promise held out in his opening speech. In a month's time his unflagging energy had cleared off the whole heap of business which his predecessor had left in arrear. During his few years of high office justice was never delayed, whatever whispers went forth about the selling of it. His sittings were continued many days after the close of each term; only "the depth of the three long vacations" being reserved for "studies, arts, and sciences," for which

he always avowed his innate tenderness. He made himself popular with the judges and leading barristers, by frequently asking them to dinner, and unbending himself among them when the feast was over. In the continued wranglings between Sir John and Lady Pakington, which are brought for settlement into his own Court, he seems to have held the balance even between two of the most tiresome fools that ever washed their dirty linen abroad. Meanwhile, Sir Edward Coke was still bullied with threats of fine and demands for further revision of his reports; while the Court of High Commission began steadily to enlarge its powers for mischief through Bacon's fearless tampering with judges less bold or proud than his fallen rival.

His own courage, however, sorted well with that of his juniors. While the King and his favourite were away in Scotland, Coke applied to the Lord Keeper for a warrant to regain possession of his daughter Frances, who had been privily carried off from his house by her mother, on the plea of saving her from a forced match with Buckingham's brother, Sir John Villiers. A warrant being refused by Bacon, who foresaw the danger to himself in any alliance between his old enemy and his present patron, Coke rashly took the law into his own hands. His wife obtained the justice withheld from him; and Coke, if Mr. Dixon's dates be correct, was glad to save himself by a timely compromise from further harm at the hands of a judge who preferred the duties of an

advocate. Bacon's interference in this quarrel, and his earnest advice to the King against such a match, drew forth such angry letters from both James and Buckingham, that he hastened to humble himself while there was yet time. He assured the former that henceforth he would further by all the means in his power the match he had just been striving by deeds and words to undo. When the Court had returned to Whitehall, he was fain to sit for two days among the lacqueys in Buckingham's ante-chamber, before he could succeed in plunging himself at the favourite's feet, and earning a reluctant pardon by the fullest confession of his fault. The penance he thus performed in atonement, not only for having thwarted the favourite, but yet more for the slighting way he had written about him to the King, was speedily followed by the marriage he had so greatly dreaded, and by his enemy's reappearance in the Privy Council.

Buckingham, however, soon relented towards one so pliable, yet withal of such fair repute. Bacon, for his part, seems to have spared no pains to undo the effect of his late miscarriage. The friends and kindred of Villiers grew rich on patents of monopolies confirmed at his advice to such infamous harpies as Sir Giles Mompesson and Sir Francis Michell. Few causes of any moment came before him in which Buckingham did not more or less openly interfere, or in which his interference was openly

resented by the judge. At length, in January, 1618, the Lord Keeper was raised to the higher grade of Lord Chancellor, and a few months after publicly invested with the title of Baron Verulam, in the presence of Prince Charles and some of the first peers in the realm. In October of the same year he hounded on his master and the bench of judges to the judicial murder of Sir Walter Raleigh, for crimes which had never been clearly proved, had since been paid for with a long imprisonment, and had at length been virtually pardoned by his appointment as chief commander of the ill-starred expedition to Guiana. When Raleigh had applied for a formal pardon before he set sail, he had been advised by Bacon himself, to "spare his purse in this particular; for," proceeded his counsellor, "upon my life, you have a sufficient pardon already, the King having, under his broad seal, made you admiral of his fleet, and given you power of life and death over the soldiers and officers you command." But when, after Sir Walter's return, a cry had come from Spain for vengeance on the invader of Spanish ground, the Lord Chancellor, taking counsel with the assembled judges, led the way in recommending that Raleigh should without any new trial be at once beheaded for his old crime, because "nothing short of an express pardon could purge the penalties of treason; and Raleigh being *civiliter mortuus*, ought *naturally* to be put to death." Whatever were Raleigh's sins, and many enough he had to

answer for, every one felt that on this occasion he had been sacrificed by a false friend and a cowardly King, on hardly the faintest colour of a law, to the anger of a nation whom all England had long regarded as its natural foe.

Two years later the Attorney-General, Sir Henry Yelverton, was tried in the Star Chamber on a frivolous charge of having inserted in a public charter clauses trenching on the royal prerogative. He had offended Bacon as well as Buckingham by pandering neither to the latter's greed nor the former's self-esteem. Bacon himself presided at the trial, and delivered a speech which Mr. Dixon may consider lenient, but which succeeded in evoking a sentence "redounding to the King's great honour;" a phrase by no means dark to the King, who came across it in a letter assuring him of Bacon's thorough success, and deep contentment with a defence by which "many deep parts of the charge were deeper printed." At this very time people were reading, with wonder, delight, or disapproval, the great work in which Bacon embodied his ripest ponderings on that new system of inductive philosophy which, by reversing the old syllogistic process, has already clothed some of the darkest passages in the book of Nature with a meaning and a beauty unconceived by the most farsighted of ancient seers. In return for his dedication of the "Novum Organum," and the special gift of a copy to King James, Bacon received from His Majesty a

kind letter of thanks and compliments, neither ungraceful nor probably insincere. Even Buckingham wrote to congratulate a Chancellor whose philosophy did not clash with the services needed by his patron.

On the 27th January, 1621, Bacon's glory was at its height. On that day he was invested, in the usual way,—not, as Mr. Dixon says, by special ordinance—with the robe and coronet of Viscount St. Albans. Three months later he had lost all that either an honest or a worldly man would have counted precious—all at least but the honour of having written the great text-book of modern philosophy. Between the haughty advice he gave the Parliament which sat on the 30th January — the first time for nearly seven years—and his abject prayer for mercy to the peers who were sent to hear him verify his own written confession of the guilt laid at his door, there lies enclosed the last act of as mournful a play as ever was witnessed on this earthly stage. Never, perhaps, was pride so near destruction as when the Lord Chancellor, flushed with his growing honours, and over-confident in the temper of those he had so often swayed before, lectured both Houses on their duty and demeanour in a strain which Elizabeth herself could not have outdone. With a blindness doubly strange in one so shrewd and experienced, he was unfurling every sail to the ripple of the nearing hurricane. Having voted the needful supplies, the Commons proceeded

to do their duties with an earnestness that took the Court by surprise. Committees on monopolies, on the abuses of courts of justice, were quickly formed under the leadership of men determined to wreak a signal vengeance on the chief authors of the late misrule. The popular feeling against the Court had not been lessened by James's cowardly refusal to aid his unhappy son-in-law, the discrowned King of Bohemia, the fugitive Elector Palatine. Buckingham himself was threatened in the punishment awarded to Mompesson and Michell. The inquiry into judicial abuses had for its special aim the downfall of a Chancellor already endeared to James and Buckingham by his powerful support of every scheme for enlarging the royal influence, and enriching the house of Villiers. Seeing their own danger, James and his favourite declined to shield their ablest servant from the popular rage. Here, indeed, Mr. Dixon has stumbled on a mare's nest of unwonted size. In the teeth of all facts and likelihood, he requests us to look on Bacon's fall as the result of a deep laid conspiracy between Coke and the Villiers faction. So monstrous a bantling has seldom before been held out as the true child of historic research. In the lack of all evidence for such a claim, we need only here say that the Villiers faction were the first to fall under the lash of a reforming Parliament; that Sir Edward Villiers was sent abroad to escape the doom of his fellow-swindlers; that Coke was afterwards lodged in the

Tower for his overboldness that year against the Court; and that Bacon himself was ere long writing to Buckingham as to an assured and powerful friend.

On that last scene of Bacon's public life we have neither room nor wish to dwell. When the cry of abuses in the Courts of Justice had narrowed, yet deepened, into a long roll of specific charges against the Lord Chancellor himself, he began at length to see that in the net which he had more than once prepared for others he also had now been caught. Utterly unmanned by the drear discovery, conscious of his actual guilt, and reading his doom in the cold looks and wary silence of his courtly friends, he only avoided the torture of a public trial by sending in to the peers, from his sick room, a written confession of his guilt on every one of the charges set down against him. In his last wild clutching at every straw, he offered to bribe James with "a good history of England, and a better digest of his laws," if somehow, with His Majesty's help, the bitter cup of a sentence by his peers might only pass away. To the Lords who came to hear him certify the genuineness of his own signature, he burst forth with an abject prayer for mercy to such a broken reed. In spite of the King's efforts to befriend him, of his own personal weight among the peers, of the pity commonly felt for such a criminal, the Lords unanimously found him guilty of gross bribery and corruption; and he who had so long striven to

serve two masters was at last sent to the Tower, a prisoner during the King's pleasure, doomed to pay an enormous fine, stripped of his many official glories, forbidden evermore to sit in the Upper House, to aspire to any public post, or even to come within the verge of the Court. Because a motion to suspend his titles of nobility during life was defeated by a majority of two, Mr. Dixon holds that the sentence actually passed on Bacon suggests no mark whatever of a moral branding.

This sad tale of unutterable meanness ends not even here. Bacon was hardly lodged in that Tower where Raleigh had lingered so many years, when he began praying the King and Buckingham to set him free. The very next day, chiefly it seems through the kindness of Prince Charles, he was removed to a pleasant country villa, where his drooping spirits soon revived under the sweet air and the "loving usage" of his host, Sir John Vaughan. Dunned by his creditors and baffled in his hopes of returning to York House, which lay too near the Court, he retired by royal command to his estate of Gorhambury. But to one so fond of company and court favour such a retirement soon came to be worse than the Tower itself. In a whining prayer to the Lords for leave to go elsewhere, he appeals to their compassion much like a professional beggar flaunting his rags and leanness in the face of every kind-looking passer-by. To James and Buckingham he kept moaning about his creditors, the smallness of

his present income, and the state of utter helplessness to which His Majesty's past kindness had helped to reduce the faithfulest and most useful of servants. The King, on his part, did all he dared in his poor friend's behalf. The fine of £40,000 was put out to interest for Bacon's use, and a qualified pardon was passed under the great seal. He had also the rents of his landed property and other resources of like value, saved from the wreck of his former greatness and the hands of hungering creditors. But his love of show and profusion was not more quenchable than his greed of place. A year later, when he had already published his "History of Henry VII.," and had nearly written out the "De Augmentis," he continued to plague the King for some place in his public or private service, in breach of the sentence so lately awarded him. Complaints of growing poverty and mounting debts continued to escape the man who never showed himself abroad without a handsome equipage and a large following, and who still refused to strip himself of his feathers by selling any of his Gorhambury woods. It was not till he had failed in his last suit to James for the vacant Provostship of Eton College—not till age and its growing infirmities warned him to fix his thoughts on other things, that he contented himself with asking only for a full erasure of "that blot of ignominy" cast upon him by his banishment from the House of Peers. The pardon he sought was granted him three years after the original

sentence; but his health by this time was utterly broken, and after a brief term of enforced resignation, clouded by domestic squabbles, but somewhat enlightened by the company of divers wits, poets, and philosophers, the great founder of modern science breathed his last on Easter Sunday, 1626, bequeathing in his will "his name and memory to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages."

Mr. Dixon's defence of Bacon's chancellorship is the worst part of the book. We are assured, for instance, that no charge of judicial corruption was ever stirred against Bacon's predecessor, Lord Chancellor Egerton; that the bribes which Bacon was accused of taking were all prescriptive fees or harmless presents; that the gifts were openly offered and openly received; that they who made them never succeeded in turning justice from its own course; that Bacon steadily holds to the avowal of his utter innocence in point either of law or morals, while he admits his own carelessness and the many abuses that warranted a fair inquiry into the courts of law. The short answer to all this lies in the one fact which Mr. Dixon has most unwarrantably suppressed. In that confession, which Bacon drew up for his judges, he expressly avows his own guilt: "*I do plainly and ingenuously confess that* I AM GUILTY OF CORRUPTION; and do renounce all defence, and put myself upon the grace and mercy of your lordships." Yet Mr. Dixon can

say that "he pleads guilty to carelessness, not to crime."

The fact is, that Bacon throughout demeaned himself like one conscious of a very bad cause. He never speaks, writes, or acts like an innocent man. His denials grew weaker and weaker, and his quibbles more and more manifest as the case went on. He tried to save himself from foundering by throwing to his judges one admission after another, until every thing he ought to have prized most dearly had been swept away; and that which he really prized the most of all—his rank, his wealth, his worldly fame, was torn not the less certainly from his clinging grasp. He knew well that even before his own day bribery in a judge was accounted a heinous wrong, yet he never seemed to realize the shame of his own misdeeds, and fooled himself to the last in the belief that whatever gifts he might have taken, he had always judged each case on its own merits, had always shown himself a faithful servant to the Crown; as if his shortcomings in one direction were wiped out by his excellence in another, or as if the fact of bribery turned on the character of the judgements given. It is, indeed, this moral deadness which lies at the root of all his public doings, which comes out now and again in his private letters and some other writings, that bear on personal or political things. In him the intellect of a Solomon was yoked to the spirit of a slave and the conscience of a housemaid. He

showed himself as far beneath Coke in moral dignity as he out-topped Coke in speculative genius. No Hindoo could have courted the great Akbar more slavishly than Bacon bowed himself before the despicable James. His wisdom, after all, was like that of the first Napoleon—a fair guide to present advantage, but a false light to any lasting good. His worldly career points a moral strangely akin to that of the great Corsican upstart. His utter downfall in the very noon of his worldly greatness suggests the fittest answer to those amiable theorists, who shrink from reading the sad truths that nature loves to scrawl over her fairest workmanship. For all his splendid parts, his loveable qualities, his social charms, his friends at court, his lack of personal foes abroad; yet when his hour of trial came, he fell at once to the ground, covered with shame, abandoned by his most powerful friends, regarded with scornful pity by those who had to pronounce his doom. Could ruin so utter have befallen the pure high-hearted patriot, whom Mr. Dixon, misled by his heated fancy, has arrayed in the outward likeness of Francis Bacon?

WILLIAM PITT.

The life of William Pitt, second in time, but far the first in fame and genius of the children born to his great namesake, the first Earl of Chatham, seems at length in a fair way of being worthily written out by his talented kinsman, the son of his earliest friend, Lord Stanhope. In the two volumes which bring his story down to the ill-timed accession of Catherine's crazy son to the throne of all the Russias, his lordship has betrayed an amount of hero-worship wonderfully small for these days of high coloured portraiture; while the simple ease of his style will be held to do scant justice to the greatness of his theme, and the partial newness of his matter, by readers lately accustomed to the picturesque spiciness of Macaulay, and the eccentric rhapsodies of Carlyle. With the help of documents too sparingly used by Pitt's former biographer, and of many more which Tomline never had a chance of using, he has given us a fuller and more human likeness of the man whose political career was the one thing that his whilom tutor cared to develop, in

the unfinished work which these volumes bid fair to supersede.

And the result is all in Pitt's favour. Hitherto, in the popular fancy, the great Tory chief has enjoyed no tangible existence outside the walls of Downing-street and the House of Commons. He was a great statesman, who had made fine speeches, and about whom many fine speeches were continually made; a minister whose commanding genius, according to one party, had saved his country from mob-rule; whose reckless policy, according to another, had plunged it deeper and deeper in the slough of social and political suffering. His name was useful to point a moral or excuse a page of political declamation, for or against the principles he espoused. But beyond the fact of his taking much port, and eschewing the favourite haunts of social profligacy, the man himself, apart from his official surroundings, inspired in most of us very little of that human interest which every one feels in the history of his great father, of Fox, Sheridan, and other statesmen still less renowned in the parliaments of their day. He was hardly looked upon as a being of like passions, sympathies, and desires, with the men who cheered his speeches, even while they decried his politics. If the satirists of his own day described him as carrying the stately member of parliament into every act of his private life—much as Mrs. Siddons was said to order tea with the tone and measured words of a tragedy queen—what wonder that we of this present

age, should have caught up the echo of a tale which none of his biographers had done much to gainsay until now? Into this point Macaulay himself attained no clearer insight than his neighbours. Thanks, however, in great part to Lord Stanhope, we are henceforth enabled to look on his famous kinsman as something less hard and cold than the statue which represents him in one of the London squares. Like Shakspeare's Hermione placed on her pedestal, the seeming marble trembles into life and feeling as we draw nearer, and he who a minute before seemed the very embodiment of official impassiveness, brightens or melts anon into some outbreak of that softer nature which still lurked under the thick crust of his outward demeanour. Haughty, overbearing, self-reliant, as became his father's son; trained from his earliest childhood to those public duties of which for so many years he showed himself the willing slave, and eventually became the untimely victim; deaf from boyhood, whether by nature, strength of purpose, or both combined, to the promptings of unseemly passion, Pitt could write his mother letters instinct with the truest affection, could enjoy his leisure hours with the zest of a boy just freed from school, and entertain his friends with bursts of playfulness and streams of discursive wit—such as Wilberforce, at least, had never relished so heartily elsewhere. Ungracious he might be towards strangers, and distant towards the fairer sex, but among his nearer friends and the

members of his own family, he enjoyed a character for tenderness, agreeable manners, and delight in social pastimes, which no mere piece of dull officialism could ever have attained.

The year of Pitt's birth, 1759, was memorable for the long list of triumphs gained under his father's auspices by British commanders in every quarter of the world. The names of Minden, Quebec, Quiberon, Lagos, Guadaloupe, Chinsurah, Goree, shed no common lustre over this the most glorious year of Chatham's life. Two years later the Great Commoner had been driven from his post by the growing jealousies of his own cabinet, and the influence of the new King. Once more, in 1766, he took the helm of state, but exchanged his old popularity and his leadership of the Commons, for a short spell of the royal friendship and a place in the House of Lords. Within two years Chatham had given up his seals of office, never more to take them again. His voice was heard in the House of Lords, but his time henceforth was chiefly devoted to the education of his two elder sons. Little William, the second, though weak in frame, gave early promise of future excellence. At seven years of age he told his tutor how glad he was at not being the eldest son, for he wanted "to speak in the House of Commons like papa." He was not quite thirteen when his mother, writing to her husband, dwelt with a mother's pride on William's amazing forwardness, which had already carried him beyond a brother three years older than

himself. A few months later he had written and brought out for home-acting, at Burton-Pynsent, a tragedy full of politics, but curiously devoid of love. The plot of it, according to Lord Macaulay, turned on a contest about a Regency; and the play itself reads as if it had been written seventeen years later, "by some Pittite poetaster, at the time of the rejoicings for the recovery of George III., in 1789." In the summer of 1773, the poet Hayley wrote of young Pitt as "a wonderful boy of fourteen," and only regretted that he himself had been too shy to consult his youthful hero about the plan of an epic poem he had lately begun.

A fond father to all his children, the gouty Earl of Chatham watched with special care over the one whose bodily weakness threatened most danger to his great mental promise. His pride in young William's talents and high aspirations was repeatedly shown in letters to his son during the latter's abode at Cambridge, whither he went in the autumn of 1773, in years a boy of fourteen, in parts and learning a grown man. Here the weak health which drew from his anxious father such tender warnings against too eager a pursuit of lettered lore, delayed for several months the progress of those studies on which he had now entered under the guidance of George Prettyman, afterwards better known as Bishop Tomline. With the aid, however, of timely rest from all work, of horse-exercise, careful diet, and plenty of port wine, the boyish commoner of Pem-

broke Hall returned to his college in the middle of next year, took his honorary M.A. degree in the spring of 1776; and still thirsting after fresh knowledge, continued to keep his terms and to read with his tutor during that and the four following years. By the end of that time he had gone through almost every known Greek and Latin author, had made some way in the study of natural philosophy and civil law, and in mathematics had gained a proficiency equal to that usually demanded of those who stood for wranglers' honours. His scholarship, while lacking the verbal nicety and imitative graces of an English public school, was wonderful in its own way. To a youth who caught at once, as it were instinctively, the meaning of the hardest passages in Æschylus and Thucydides, it mattered little that he had never done much in the way of Latin verse, or cared to render a page of Hume into the Greek of Xenophon. This seerlike insight, helped as it was by a memory not less wonderful, tempted his tutor in after days to avow his firm belief, that "no one ever read the Greek language, even after devoting his whole life to the study of it, with greater facility than Mr. Pitt at the age of twenty-one."

Nor did the young graduate's zeal for classic studies lessen his old delight in English reading. With Shakspeare and Milton he was quite at home; he admired the writings of Hume and Robertson, read the best works of Bolingbroke and Conyers Middleton through and through, and thoroughly

mastered the whole argument of Locke's famous Essay. Now, too, he had probably begun to explore that great work of Adam Smith's on political economy, whose teaching he was ere long heard to enforce with bootless eloquence on a stiffnecked House of Commons. All this while, according to Bishop Tomline, his unassuming manners, cheerful temper and quick play of harmless wit, the generous frankness of his heart, and the turn he had for all innocent pastimes, made him popular among his fellow-gownsmen and endeared him to many of a riper age, who had thought, in such a miracle of cleverness, only to find an equal miracle of pushing self-conceit.

While yet at Cambridge, Pitt lost the father whose love had helped to make him what he already was; whose speeches he had latterly been so proud to hear, and whose fainting form he had helped, not a month before, to bear away from an assembly that saw him stricken down in the vain attempt to stammer forth his last words of public warning. The death of this once popular statesman happened on the 11th May, 1778; and by none was he more deeply regretted than by his second son, who from time to time repaid with many a loving tribute, the love he himself had so abundantly received. Two years afterwards Pitt lost, within a few months of each other, two more members of his family, to both of whom he was greatly attached—his eldest sister, Viscountess Mahon, and his younger brother James, already a post-captain in the Royal Navy. Chatham's

death left William heir to no more than a sum of about £300 a-year. On this modest income he entered, early in 1780, his newly-purchased rooms at Lincoln's Inn, and went his first circuit as a barrister in the summer of that same year. The expense of his rooms, amounting to what he then thought the "frightful sum" of £1,100, had been defrayed by his uncle, Lord Temple, on the promise of re-payment when Pitt should come of age. During the previous year much of his spare time had been spent in London on his own and his mother's business, the intervals of which were relieved by visits to the opera, dinner-parties, evenings at some house of fashion—and what he relished more than all, by frequent attendance on the debates in Parliament. On all these matters he wrote to his mother with kindly frankness, now begging her pardon for not having written a few days sooner, anon expressing the anxiety he had felt for her on the first report of a threatened landing by the French at Plymouth. In another letter, written the same year from Pembroke Hall, he confides to Lady Chatham his intention to stand for the first vacant seat in his own university; a piece of boldness which resulted the following autumn in leaving him at the bottom of the poll. On the 8th of June, 1780, we find him hastening to assure his mother by the post, how little he or any other of her friends had suffered from the fury of those Gordon Riots, which surged up in flames and havoc on all sides of Lincoln's Inn.

And a few days afterwards he writes again to amuse her with a picture of himself and his brother-barristers, arming against the storm which had already blown itself out.

Disappointed at Cambridge, and working hard at the law, Pitt was agreeably surprised, towards the close of this year, by the offer of a seat for Appleby, made by Sir James Lowther at the instance of their mutual friend, the Duke of Rutland. In January, 1781, he took the oaths and his seat in a House of Commons then ruled by Lord North, whose popularity as a minister had been ebbing with each new disaster in North America. Urged by his royal master to carry on a war of which he himself was tired, and battling with his wonted good-humour against a growing phalanx of opponents, led by such speakers as Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, the unlucky Premier had now to face the attack of yet another foe, who represented the principles without shaming the genius of his dead father. Under the banner of Lord Shelburne—the acting leader of the late Lord Chatham's party—this youthful statesman of twenty-one delivered, on the 26th of February, his maiden speech in support of Burke's motion for Economical Reform. Being unexpectedly called on to answer an adverse speaker, Pitt rose and made, on the spur of the moment, an answer that took the whole House by surprise. His voice, his manner, the closeness of his arguments, and the finished roundness of his sentences, were wonderful to mark on

such an occasion in so young a speaker. Burke was deeply moved; Fox in few, but generous words, stamped the performance with his highest praise. While another old member, coming up to Fox, expressed a hope that he himself might live to hear Fox and Pitt battling together, as their fathers had done before them, Pitt's ready retort turned the edge of so doubtful a compliment: "I have no doubt, General, you would like to attain the age of Methuselah." As soon as he had a spare moment, the successful speaker wrote off to assure his mother of the happiness felt by himself in a result, the tidings of which would already have reached her through "too partial a friend."

The result was less surprising than it seemed. Great natural gifts had been so sharpened by regular practice, that failure in his case had been far more wonderful than success. His modest manners covered an amount of self-possession, which past experience had done everything to confirm. The natural bent of his mind had served, before all things, to make him the ripe and ready orator which a discerning body of British gentlemen, on the very first trial, adjudged him to be. From earliest childhood his powers of speech had been carefully developed in every possible way, by the daily reciting of choice passages from the best English authors, by rendering aloud a page at a time of some Greek or Roman writer into choice and fluent English, by closely studying for different

purposes the works of Bolingbroke and Barrow, of Polybius and Thucydides, by dwelling often for hours together on some striking passage in the masterpieces of ancient oratory.* At Cambridge, according to his tutor, he specially loved to compare the opposite speeches on the same subject, supplied by Livy, Sallust, and Thucydides. In London, he never, if he could help it, missed the chance of hearing any important debate at St. Stephen's, always paying most heed to the arguments of speakers on the opposite side, considering as they went on how they could best be answered, and then ascertaining how far they were really answered by the speakers who represented his own side. Not many months before his triumph, he had astonished some of his legal brethren by the eloquence he displayed in a mock debate at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, on the dissolution of the Western Circuit Club. Even his training for the bar, and the experience already gained on circuit, help their little to explain how, "at an age when others are but entering on the study of state affairs and the practice of debating, he came forth a mature politician, a finished orator—even, as if by inspiration, an accomplished debater."*

Twice again that session did Pitt hear the sound of his own voice rewarded by the same tokens of general applause. It was clear that his opening triumph had been owing much more to the intrinsic

* Lord Brougham's "Statesmen of the Time of George III."

merits of the speaker than to the circumstances under which he spoke. On the second occasion Pitt and Fox rose together, but Fox, with ready kindness, gave way to his young comrade, whose speech drew forth the praise but not the vote of his friend Wilberforce. In replying to his third essay, in which he followed up an eloquent defence of his father, with a passionate tirade against the "cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war" with America, Dundas could not refrain from foretelling the gain his country would one day receive, from one who offered "so happy a union of first-rate abilities, high integrity, bold and honest independency of conduct, and the most persuasive eloquence." Not long after, when somebody remarked to Fox that Pitt promised to be one of the first men in Parliament—"he is so already," was the short but magnanimous reply.

In the summer of 1781 Pitt went the Western Circuit again, as it turned out, for the last time. Some weeks of the autumn he spent with his mother at Burton Pynsent. From the accounts of his contemporaries we have reason to believe that nothing but the growth of his parliamentary greatness prevented him from earning the highest honours at the bar. That he was "extremely popular" among his brethren of the circuit, respected by the old for his attainments, and endeared to the young by "his wit, good-humour, and joyous manners," his first biographer was expressly assured by one of those very

companions whom Pitt used afterwards to meet either at his own house, or at the annual dinner got up on his suggestion at Richmond-hill.

When Parliament met towards the end of November, Lord North had to put the best face he could on the recent tidings of Lord Cornwallis's surrender at York Town. Pitt's speech on the Report of the Address, and still more that on the Army Estimates, confirmed the promise of his former essays, winning fresh praises from Fox, and a special tribute to his "amazing logical abilities" from Horace Walpole. On the latter occasion Pitt was assailing the ministers about their disagreements in regard to the American war, when, seeing a little old Treasury placeman, Mr. Welbore Ellis, put down his gray head between Lord North and Lord George Germaine, the two chief dissentients, he proposed to wait until harmony could be restored between the noble subjects of his attack, "until Nestor should have composed the difference between Agamemnon and Achilles." After a few weeks' adjournment for the Christmas holidays, Parliament met again to witness the dying struggles of an unpopular ministry. Assault after assault was made by the united followers of Fox and Lord Shelburne, Pitt taking his part in the daily battle, and reaping no common share of public fame. Sometimes defeated, sometimes winning by only nine or ten, Lord North had, within two months, to give up a hopeless game; and the Rockingham

Cabinet, with Fox and Lord Shelburne for joint Secretaries of State, accepted the seals of office from a resentful and reluctant King. To the offer of a subordinate post in a government which Burke himself was content to serve as a subaltern, Pitt returned a refusal, grounded partly on some instinctive foreboding of what was afterwards to happen, partly also, as Tomline phrases it, on his "unwillingness to be considered as pledged to measures in framing which he had no concern." In other words, he would either have what he did not then expect—a seat in the Cabinet—or take his own way as an independent member until the hour for asserting his proper place should come.

That hour was drawing nearer than Pitt's ambition could then have dared to hope, or his cleverness to foresee. Meanwhile, however, the young barrister busied himself with his legal studies, and with the careful discharge of his parliamentary duties. To the measures of the new ministry he gave a general support: he sat on one important committee for inquiring into the expenses of the war; he was chosen by the friends of Parliamentary Reform to move for a select committee to search out the abuses which time had engendered in the working of our representative system. In a long and powerful speech the future champion of royal prerogative inveighed against "the corrupt influence of the Crown;" and

the future head of a warlike cabinet denounced the mischievous support rendered by the close boroughs to a war, which most of his hearers well knew had for several years been carried on with the consent of nearly the whole nation. Of course, the seeming inconsistency may be resolved into none at all, if we can refer Pitt's general conduct to one leading principle: if, whether he hated or opposed the Crown, whether he decried one war, or justified another, we believe that in all things he may really have been guided by a sense of duty to his country and a jealous zeal for the Constitution. Be that as it may, his motion, supported by Fox and other ministers, was rejected by a majority of no more than twenty in a house of more than 300. In the debate on another motion for shortening the duration of parliaments, the young reformer having sided with Fox in its support, was rewarded with a scream of passionate abuse from Burke, who—wrote Sheridan to a friend—" swore Parliament was, and always had been precisely what it ought to be, and that all people who thought of reforming it wanted to overturn the Constitution." Pitt's next speech as a reformer, in support of Lord Mahon's bill for the suppression of bribery, was answered by Fox himself with arguments much less flattering to the good sense of his hearers, than his opening sentences were to the abilities of the last speaker.

In three months from its formation the Rockingham Ministry was threatening to fall asunder, when

the death of its leader turned the likelihood into a certainty. Fox would not serve under Lord Shelburne, and the King would not give up the premier of his own choosing for the premier preferred by Fox. So the latter, with his special followers, left the treasury benches, and Pitt naturally rose into one of the vacant seats. By the middle of July, 1782, the young barrister of twenty-three had prepared to give up the Western Circuit and his rooms at Lincoln's Inn for a summer residence as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Downing Street. From that time his letters to Lady Chatham, though cordial as ever, began to be less frequent, and to treat more sparingly of political news.

His first term of office lasted not many months. Assailed by the partisans of Fox on the one hand, and those of Lord North on the other, by the thoroughgoing Tories and the thoroughgoing Whigs, the new Government was soon tottering to its fall. Lord Shelburne would have made advances to Lord North but for Pitt's downright refusal to ally himself with the authors of the American war. His lordship's bitterness against his late lieutenant at first prevented all chance of that agreement with Fox, which the latter, when afterwards besought thereto by Pitt himself, flatly declined so long as Lord Shelburne continued premier. Thenceforth, believes Bishop Tomline, Pitt and Fox met never again as friends in a private room. Meanwhile, throughout the winter of 1782-3, the youthful Chancellor vir-

tually took the lead in the Lower House against an opposition powerful in everything but a bad cause. In several keen debates he had to defend the articles of a peace just then being concluded with our revolted colonies, with France, and with Spain. It was a peace more needful to England than flattering to her pride; a peace much easier to attack than to justify in detail. If we had given back to the French and Spaniards the places conquered from them, it was something to know that the Rock of Gibraltar, and the empire which Clive had founded and Warren Hastings enlarged, were still our own. Pitt's answers to the fiery speeches of those who railed not at the peace itself, but at the terms accepted by Government, were generally marked with his wonted excellences of style and matter. Once only, in his speech on the Address, did he so far lose his temper as to counsel Sheridan to keep his epigrams and apostrophes for that stage on which he had always delighted his hearers. Sheridan at once replied in words that, often told, will yet bear telling again. "The right honourable gentleman's kind remarks almost embolden me to turn dramatist once more, and attempt, however presumptuously, to improve on one of Ben Jonson's best characters, the Angry Boy in the *Alchemist*."

Sheridan's retort seemed fitly to foretoken the coming triumph of his party. An amendment to the Address was carried against ministers, by a majority of sixteen in a large house; and a second

defeat, a few days after, glorified as it was by a speech from Pitt, hardly more notable for its surpassing eloquence and the modest grandeur of its crowning quotation from Horace, than for the circumstances of bodily disorder under which he spoke, settled the doom of a government too weak in itself to have long held together, even with no present prospect of attack from outward foes. Lord Shelburne resigned, but would fain have left a sting behind him, by recommending His Majesty to name Pitt in his stead. The advice was taken, and the "boy-statesman" was free, on his own terms, to carry on the government of a great empire, at the ripe age of rather less than twenty-four years. But Pitt would do nothing hastily, asking even for his mother's opinion, and waiting to talk over the subject with older and more experienced men. At length, after some wavering, he declined an offer which, to the Duke of Grafton's thinking, would have "overset the resolution of most men." Unable to see his way to the formation of a strong ministry, a weak one, at any rate, he would not have; and his refusal, unwelcome enough to the King, made him only the more popular with the country at large. Repeated offers were then made by the King to Lord North, but without Fox that nobleman would not take office. Once more His Majesty, who looked on Fox as a personal foe, applied for help to Pitt, but Pitt was inexorable. He waited to see how long the new coalition, that "ill-omened

marriage," whose banns he would fain have forbidden, "in the name of the public safety," was likely to stand. At length, after some preliminary quarrels amongst its chiefs, the Portland Ministry, with Fox and Lord North for Secretaries of State, got itself fairly established by the 2nd April, 1783; Pitt himself refusing to keep his former post, or lend the slightest countenance to a league so glaringly unsound, a league for which nothing but the promise of some great public good could hold out even the flimsiest pretext.

During that session Pitt brought forward a new scheme of Parliamentary Reform, the gist of which lay in a large increase of county members, and in giving the pocket-boroughs the choice between extinction and self-purification. This scheme, which had nothing whatever in common with democratic dreams of a sweeping suffrage, and election by the divine right of mere numbers, was thrown out, in spite of the aid received from Fox's own partisans, by 293 votes against 149. Another of his bills, for reforming abuses in the public offices, as shown in the yearly charge of £18,000 for stationery alone, passed the Commons, only to be quashed by the Lords. In the debates on the Budget, as we learn from a letter to his mother, Pitt was driven to give Fox such a dressing for his continued rudeness towards himself, that the great Whig leader thenceforth behaved to him more civilly than he had been wont to do when they were friends.

During the summer Pitt paid a short visit to Hayes, the old family house near Bromley, where his brother, the Earl of Chatham, had been spending the honeymoon after his marriage to the daughter of an old friend, Lord Sydney. Leaving the pair as thoroughly happy as they deserved to be, he went on to his mother at Burton Pynsent, after having taken "some dips at Brighthelmstone" by the way. Thence, after some days' shooting in Dorsetshire, and a narrow escape from the gun of his friend Wilberforce, himself, with Wilberforce and Eliot, started in September for a six weeks' trip to France, the only time he ever crossed the Channel. His fame had travelled before him, and his father's name added new warmth to the greetings showered on a son so worthy to bear it. At Paris and Fontainebleau, says Wilberforce, "they all, men and women, crowded round Pitt in shoals." Between asking and answering questions, stag-hunting, sight-seeing, and dining out, Pitt made the most of his time, carrying away with him a fair stock of French idioms, and some useful gleanings on French politics. At Rheims he talked much with a French Abbé on the affairs of both countries, telling him that France had no political, but more of civil liberty than she herself supposed, while the British constitution would probably decay first on the side of kingly prerogative and the authority of the Peers. When the Abbé expressed his surprise at the moral English bearing to be governed by a spendthrift rake like Fox,

"Ah!" replied his companion, "you have not been under the wand of the magician."

Soon after the travellers' return home Parliament met for the winter; ministers ready armed with a bill for amending the government of our Indian territories. After some sharp debates and memorable speeches from both sides—Pitt being foremost among Fox's opponents—the bill was carried triumphantly through the Lower House by more than two to one. By the Peers, however, influenced as many of them were by threats of the royal displeasure against all who voted for a measure deemed so fatal to the rights of the Crown, it was thrown out on the second reading by ninety-five votes to seventy-six. In vain did a large majority of the Commons denounce the intrigue while its issue was still uncertain. Lord Temple's whispered message had done its work, and Burke's large, well-considered scheme for rescuing the people of British India from the hands of a body of grasping merchants, and linking them, through an overruling Parliament, more closely with their fellow-subjects in Great Britain—a scheme whose worst fault lay in the starting of it some seventy years too soon for the sense of this country—was virtually overthrown by a most unwarrantable tampering on his Majesty's part with the freedom of debate in Parliament. To threaten with the worst effects of his heavy anger those who should vote with his own ministers, was a stretch of royal power which nothing but the

popular feeling against such a cabinet, and a growing outcry from many parties against the bill itself, would have enabled even so violent a ruler as George III. to accomplish without a check. So unkingly an abuse of the King's undoubted right to take counsel with all or any of his peers, marked the excess of that furious hatred borne towards the apparent authors of the new bill, by one who neither forgot a kindness nor forgave an injury. The ministers still refusing to resign of their own accord, he sent, late at night on the day after their defeat, an order for Lord North and Fox to give up their seals, and remit them to him through their Under Secretaries. Next day, the 19th December, Pitt's appointment as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer was notified to the House of Commons amidst "loud and general laughter on the opposition side."

To all appearance there was reason enough for the laughter. On the one side was an overwhelming array of numbers set off by an unwonted facing of first-rate genius; on the other was an able young orator of four-and-twenty, backed by a small tail of undistinguished followers, and but one or two names of even third-rate lustre. In the Upper House he had a staunch ally in Lord Camden, and a useful colleague in the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow. If Lord Gower's services were freely offered and gladly accepted, he was on the point of losing those of Lord Temple, who, baulked of a marquisate in

return for former merits, threw up his post of Secretary two days after he had received it from the King himself. Of the seven members of his Cabinet, Pitt alone sat in the House of Commons. Among his subordinates in that house the only one of tried experience was the Treasurer of the Navy, Henry Dundas, afterwards less happily known as Lord Melville, whose talents lay much more in the domain of business than of fine speaking. The rest were chiefly young men, such as Pratt, Eliot, Steele, whose distinctions were all to come. Wilberforce himself, whose sweet tones were beginning to be heard in kindly echo to his friend's sonorous periods, took no outward share in the government to which he gave so hearty a support. One man only seemed to stand between the throne and its declared enemies. When the youthful premier raised his tall thin frame to its full height, and began to roll forth sentence after sentence of stately argument and rounded sarcasm, in a rich, mellifluous, unbroken stream, which the most unwilling audience could not but hush itself to hear, he seemed like the one slender shaft that bears up the massy carven roof of some cathedral chapter-house, and startles you for the moment with a vague fear of seeing so slight a prop give way beneath so heavy a burden. But the daring statesman knew his strength, and let the voices of his doughtiest assailants thunder their worst upon him as harmlessly as the loudest surges break against the lonely rock of Eddystone.

Strong in the knowledge of his own powers, and hoping much from the waning popularity of his opponents, he was backed by the whole strength of a Court whose active influence insured him a large majority in the Lords, and was safe, whenever he chose it, to turn the battle against their mutual enemy in the Commons. There were always fifty or sixty pocket-boroughs, which the minister whom the Third George delighted to honour could dispose of at the next election to whomsoever he would. But in Pitt's opinion the time for dissolving Parliament had not yet come. His present cue was delay. Seeming to yield to the demands of the Opposition, he really improved his own prospects by beginning to carry on the government against a large majority of the Lower House. In vain was he challenged by repeated votes to give up his place. With the help of his sovereign and the Peers, he was determined to keep it for the present. Such a proceeding, strange as many of us might think it now, and fiercely as it was even then decried by Whigs of every shade, could neither in itself be deemed unlawful, nor, as things stood, pronounced unfair. Fox would have driven Pitt from office without a trial; he would have forced the King and Lords to take back the ministers approved by the Commons. What wonder if Pitt chose to abide by the verdict of two estates of the realm, when he could already see his way to a reversal of that so scornfully bellowed against him by the third?

And the end, in his case, went far to justify the means, had any further justification been needed. Pitt's Fabian tactics brought out the weakness of his opponents, whose factious efforts put them more and more in the wrong. Forgetting the recent violence of the King in the growing violence of the Foxites, the public feeling set more and more strongly towards what seemed the weaker side. The political question deepened into a personal one; and after an uphill fight of three months, during which the opposite ranks grew daily thinner until Burke's last motion was carried by one vote alone, the brave young premier had fairly turned the tables on his once popular rival, Charles Fox. An attack by rioters on Pitt's coach happened in good time to enhance the sympathy already shown towards a statesman, who could give away to an old ally of his father's the rich pension which almost any other man in like circumstances would have kept for himself. By giving Colonel Barré the Clerkship of the Rolls he had also saved the country a yearly pension of three thousand pounds, which that gentleman had first received from the Rockingham Cabinet. At length, when all the supplies had been voted, and the Mutiny Bill passed, Pitt proceeded to throw himself on the country with all the trustfulness begotten of a good cause, backed by a powerful muster of "King's Friends."

The issue was even better than Pitt could have dared to hope. No less than one hundred and

sixty of "Fox's Martyrs," as they were nicknamed, lost their seats in the new parliament. Pitt himself headed the poll for Cambridge University, which he continued ever after to represent. Lord Hood was first for Westminster, Fox scarcely winning the second place in his old borough. In one stronghold of Whig influence—the town of Norfolk—its late member, a gentleman of good repute and large property, had to decline a contest with the ministerial candidate. The great shire of York, in spite of the Whig families who owned so much of it, returned young Wilberforce and another of the same party with equally marked success. Erskine, Conway, Lord John Cavendish, were defeated at other places, and Windham had a hard fight for Norwich. To Pitt's side rallied all who had been displeased with the Coalition, alarmed by the India Bill, or disgusted by so many violent attacks on a minister yet untried and blameless touching the events which had brought him into power. Men so different in every way as Sawbridge and Thurlow, Jenkinson and Wilkes, helped to make up in his favour a majority as large as that which had erewhile laughed to scorn the tidings of his appointment as First Lord of the Treasury. The friends who had so often urged him to dissolve the late parliament before its time, must have owned the wisdom of a delay which enabled him in the first two debates after the opening of the new one, to carry his point by 283 votes to 136, and by 282 to 114.

During those stormy and anxious weeks, Pitt had found time to write his mother one or two hurried but cheering notes, and to serve his old tutors, Wilson and Pretyman, who became canons, the one of Windsor, the other of Westminster. He had also persuaded his friend, the Duke of Rutland, to accept the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, a post of high, though somewhat dangerous eminence for so new a hand. The Duke's untimely death in 1787 cut short a career of no small promise, and lost Pitt a loyal and powerful friend.

Parliament was opened by George III. on the 19th May, 1784. A batch of seven new Peers proclaimed that monarch's joy in a victory which saved the country from a crisis almost as serious as that of 1641. At such a moment his first minister might have relied upon the royal gratitude for almost any thing he chose to ask; but Pitt's Roman virtue was satisfied with rewarding others, while he himself cared for nothing but the power of serving his country his own way. A stern sense of justice rather than any mean grudge against his defeated rival led him to authorize an inquiry into the late elections for Westminster, which for many months disabled Fox from taking his seat as second member for that borough. Meanwhile, however, the great Whig orator made his way into the House through a distant Scotch borough, and raised such a cloud of suspicion against Pitt as eventually forced him to abandon a scrutiny which gave his enemies so good

a handle for misrepresentation. Besides the debates on this matter there was no lack of hostile criticism on the ministerial schemes of financial reform and changes in the government of India. With an exhausted exchequer, a vast amount of unfunded debt, and consols standing at 56 or 57, Pitt's work in the former direction was burdensome enough. The heavy imposts on tea and spirits had led to a vast system of organized smuggling, that defrauded the revenue and demoralized all classes of the people. Pitt was among the first to see what no sane person would now care to dispute, that the one evil could only be quelled by doing away with the other, and also that, down to a certain point, the very lowering of customs or excise dues on certain things would increase the consumption thereof without harming the revenue.

While lowering the duties on tea and spirits, he sought to make up the immediate loss to the revenue by laying a window-tax on all houses above the poorest kind. Taxes new or additional were also laid on a good many other articles, foreign or home made. Finding himself obliged yet further to atone for past mismanagement by asking for a fresh loan, he departed from former usage by throwing the loan open to public auction, instead of assigning it to a number of private friends and jobbing contractors. Far less admirable than most of these measures must be accounted his India Bill, which saddled the Court of Directors with an ignorant, meddling,

irresponsible Board of Control, and cursed India with a double government, the fruitful source of rash or aggressive wars, of more than one national disaster, and of those financial derangements under which she is now groaning. Yet the bill passed through both Houses with triumphant ease, while nothing whatever was done to pare away the huge commercial monopoly enjoyed by the company whose political powers were thus curtailed. The new Board had power enough for evil, but little power for good; and the fearful events of 1857 dealt the finishing blow to a system which only aggravated the mischief it was meant to cure.

While Pitt was trying to settle the finances, he was also seeking to insure the regular payment of his mother's pension, which, owing to many previous claims on the fund assigned for it, was continually falling into arrear. Pending the result, he urged her to make use of his own spare cash, for the income of his twofold office would really furnish more than his expenses could require. Stress of hard business left him no time for a visit to Burton Pynsent, or any place beyond Brighton, even during those autumn holidays which he knew so well how to enjoy. At his hired house on Putney Heath the young minister pursued his work, or now and then received a few of his friends, when nothing of moment required his presence at Downing Street or St. James's. There, as he pored over the national account-books, or waited for further news from Ire-

land, he could have found small comfort for his want of leisure in the knowledge of his proud position as the first, though youngest statesman of his day, the most powerful minister that his country had seen since the Revolution. Immersed in politics and finance, he gave but little heed to the astonishment everywhere caused by his late success, of which Gibbon himself, writing that autumn from Lausanne, could not help avowing, that "a youth of five-and-twenty, who raises himself to the government of an empire by the power of genius, and the reputation of virtue, is a circumstance unparalleled in history, and, in a general view, is not less glorious to the country than to himself."

The triumphs of this year were well sustained by those of many years to come. If he was forced to abandon the Westminster scrutiny in deference to the English Parliament, and to give up a large and statesmanlike scheme of commercial intercourse with Ireland, because Ireland wilfully shut her eyes to the opening offered her; if his next motion for Parliamentary Reform met with no more success than the last; if his scheme for fortifying the English dockyards came to nought; if the wits of Brookes's and the poets of the *Rolliad* worried and lampooned the ministry, whom Burke, Fox, and Sheridan belaboured with unsparing eloquence face to face, Pitt soon recovered his lost ground by the success which rewarded his financial efforts during a time of unwonted difficulty, by his happy conclusion

of a commercial treaty with France, and perhaps more than all by the cordial welcome granted to his famous scheme for paying off the National Debt by means of a Sinking Fund, which was sure to answer if England could only enjoy a few centuries of unbroken peace. Of course, in these enlightened days, when every one is supposed to believe in the budgets of Mr. Gladstone and the politics of the Manchester School, Pitt's glorious blunder would be treated with due contempt; but in those days Adam Smith had few disciples, and empiricism ran riot over the realms of finance. In most respects the Tory premier could see much further ahead than the Manchester merchants, who threw up their caps on the failure of his Irish Treaty, or the great Whig leader, whose hostility to a commercial treaty with France based itself on his avowed belief that France, "as the natural foe of Great Britain," was eager "to tie our hands and prevent us from engaging in any alliance with other powers." And yet, he who thus spoke in 1787, was afterwards quoted for the stubbornness of his belief in the friendliness of the First Napoleon, while Pitt's name has continually been held up to the hatred of all classes of Frenchmen as that of their most implacable foe.

Nor was Pitt's foreign policy at this time less triumphant than his domestic. When, for instance, in 1787, France prepared to support the Democrats of Holland against their Stadtholder, the Prince of Orange, Pitt promptly set himself to oppose her

both in Europe and the East, with an air so threatening, that France, before the year's end, agreed to disarm on England doing the same; a result which drew from the Russian Ambassador his warmest praise of conduct so rare in England since the retirement of Pitt's father. And again, in 1789, when British vessels had been seized in Nootka Sound, and plundered by Spanish officers on some idle plea of rights, the British minister enforced his demands for a full atonement, by sending so powerful a fleet into the Bay of Biscay the following year, that the haughty Spaniards gave way after much demurring, and concluded a treaty not more flattering to the nation at large, than politically useful to the minister himself. By that time Great Britain had well nigh regained her proud position of thirty years before. Prosperous at home and powerful abroad, ruled by a statesman whom Burke and Fox could not help admiring while they found the most fault with him, she seemed like one of her own men-of-war, riding in gallant trim under the hand of a skilful master, towards a haven parted from her only by a broad belt of gently flowing sea. The loss of her American colonies had been replaced by new sources of national life, and the weight of her past debts became as nothing in the hands of a financier who had already begun to wipe them off. As if yet further to attest his acknowledged greatness, the general elections of this very year placed Pitt in command of a larger following than before. Nor at

this time was he less supreme in the Cabinet than in the Commons. Knowing that Pitt alone stood between him and the coalition, his stiff-necked Majesty yielded in most things to the stronger mind of one who would put up with no backstairs plotting; and Pitt's firm conduct throughout the discussions on the Regency Bill, must have greatly strengthened his former hold on the friendship of a Sovereign faithless only to his enemies, real or supposed.

Did his firmness in demanding a restricted Regency spring mainly from personal motives, or from a high sense of duty to King and State? The latter solution seems far the likelier, although the sense of duty may have been quickened by a noble scorn of the Prince of Wales himself, and yet more by Fox's bold assertion of the princely right divine to act for his suffering father without consent of Lords and Commons. Pitt, like Lord Thurlow, might have paid his court to the rising sun; but he scorned to gratify ambition at the expense of honour, and nothing but the old King's timely recovery saved him from the disgrace incurred by his obstinate loyalty. Equally clear to our eyes seems his conduct towards Warren Hastings, when Burke, unable to control his just wrath at being dared by one of that great criminal's partisans to make good the charges of which he had given notice, entered on the great indictment which ended in the trial of Hastings at the bar of the House of Lords. Caring only to see justice done, Pitt voted against a renewal

of the first charge, on the ground that Hastings' cruelty to the Rohillas had been condoned by his after services to the State. But when further charges were brought forward, and compared by him with the defences made, he found himself obliged—as Dundas wrote to Lord Cornwallis—to let the impeachment run its course, whether for good or evil to the accused; a conclusion to which we owe perhaps the most glorious speech—that of Sheridan on the Begum charge—that ever thrilled with delight a wondering House of Commons, and certainly the longest state-trial that ever dragged its slow length through a much-enduring House of Peers. On the other hand, Pitt would hear of no attempt to impeach Sir Elijah Impey, against whom—whatever Lord Macaulay may since have fondly imagined—he at the time could see nothing worthy of just complaint.

In 1786 Pitt lost another dear sister, Lady Harriot Eliot, only a year after her marriage to his old friend and fellow-traveller. In the midst of his own great sorrow, he went off the day after the funeral to comfort his mother, now falling into confirmed ill-health at Burton Pynsent. The year before he had become the owner of Holwood, a pretty country-seat near Hayes, commanding one of those fair blue prospects which endeared Kent to the eyes of Horace Walpole. Here he found "a great deal of very pleasant employment" in planting, cutting, and planning improvements of various kinds;

and here, whenever he could get away from business, he loved to unbend himself in a small but choice circle of particular friends. Whatever he might seem to the outside world, the cares of state had not yet robbed him of the social merits which had made him popular with the companions of an earlier day. As late as 1797, Lord Wellesley could still paint him as shining in society "with a calm and steady lustre," more astonishing than "his most splendid efforts in Parliament;" as one of quick and ready wit, endowed beyond any man of his acquaintance "with a gay heart and a social spirit." His manners were plain, his tastes undeveloped, and partly from natural, partly from other causes, his address lacked all that play of overflowing heartiness which at once endeared his scampish rival to all who ever exchanged a few words with him. Pitt was probably far more sincere than Fox, but the latter had always a wider range of sympathies, and from difference of age as well as habits, knew greatly more of the ways of men and women. Pitt, indeed, from his greater self-respect, would never have stooped to do all that Fox did; and perhaps too, his official training had tended to harden his general manner, as it seemed latterly to formalise the style of his letters to Burton Pynsent. In point of morality, there was no comparison between the two. If Pitt sometimes drank a little too freely of port wine, he had forsworn the dice box many years ago, and his chastity rendered him the butt of more than one

coarse scribbler. Even his debts, though neither small in themselves, nor wholly excusable, were as a drop to the sea of Fox's extravagance; and the money that failed to cover them went to enrich—not the gaming-hells and Corinthian retreats of London —but the household servants, who, being paid to live like honest men, availed themselves of their master's want of leisure to rob him without mercy through his weekly bills.

Hearing somewhat of these embarrassments, the bankers and monied men of London had, during the debates on the Regency Bill, tendered the great minister a free gift of a hundred thousand pounds. But Pitt, though fully alive to the delicate meaning of such an offer made at such a time, declined to accept it on any account whatever, and prepared, in the almost certain event of a Regency, to work off his debts by practice at the bar. His noble pride would never allow him to accept the honours or emoluments which men of an earthlier nature held dear. In such a spirit he repeatedly refused, as the first statesman of this century did after him, to be invested with the most knightly Order of the Garter, bargaining only that his brother, Lord Chatham, might wear the ribbon in his stead. To himself, conscious of his own capacity, and fortified by the approval of his own heart, the mere adornments of rank and worldly show were so much dross, compared with the homage everywhere paid to the foremost commoner in Great Britain, the most powerful subject of a mighty

kingdom. It was only from fear of hurting his master's great kindliness that, in obedience to his express command, he consented, in 1792, to take upon him the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports. But the good things he spurned for himself, he delighted in offering to others. Somewhat against the King's own feeling, Pitt got his old Cambridge tutor made at once Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of St. Paul's. A peerage was tossed to Lord Hood, that the Earl of Chatham might, in an evil moment, step into his place at the head of the Admiralty. His cousin, Lord Temple, took the Irish Vice-royalty in return for the Marquisate of Buckingham, and left Ireland a few years after, because Pitt could not prevail on his Majesty to grant him a dukedom. The younger Grenville having proved somewhat of a failure in the Commons, was speedily transferred to the upper House, a sphere in which he had early longed to see himself shine. Never, indeed, were peerages so plentiful as during the reign of William Pitt, and never did honest zeal for the public good succeed in sailing so near the wind of vulgar nepotism. It is but fair to say that Lord Grenville's promotion was fully justified by the services he afterwards rendered both to Pitt and Ireland; but how far England gained by the employment of Lord Chatham instead of Hood, the volumes before us have failed to show.

Pitt's first check in his foreign policy brought out the ready skill with which, at need, he could sheer

off from a doubtful enterprise. When English intervention had saved Turkey from her Austrian assailant, the Russian Empress haughtily refused to make peace with the Turks on the conditions named by England and Prussia. Pitt accordingly, in concert with his Prussian allies, began to arm. Had his own designs been properly backed at home, Turkey might still be strong enough to do without help from so many Christian doctors. But he found opposition in his own Cabinet, and signs of yet more in the House of Commons. So in compliance with the general feeling, he straightway withdrew his motion while the votes were yet strong on his side, sent off another messenger to St. Petersburg, who overtook the former, and the Empress Catherine was thus left to enforce her own terms on the defeated Sultan.

In the debates on the Slave Trade Pitt steadily voted with his friend, Wilberforce, against majorities at one time more overwhelming than those that baffled him on the question of Parliamentary Reform. For nine years of Pitt's Government, England enjoyed unbroken peace, and waxed more prosperous year by year. But towards the end of this happy period, the thunder-clouds of the French Revolution began to cast an ill-omened shadow upon our own shores. The same course of events that severed the old union between Fox and Burke, gave birth to much restless and violent feeling throughout these islands. Each fresh tale of havoc wrought by a

howling mob, in the teeth of a helpless king, a panic-stricken nobility, and a half-hearted National Assembly, served to dishearten the moderate and to inflame the antipathies of the bigoted among ourselves. Redhot loyalists clamoured for stern penal laws at home, and a general crusade against the new Revolution. Redhot "Friends of the People" gloated in public meetings over the coming downfall of kings and nobles and priests throughout the world. A drunken Birmingham rabble burnt down the house of the Unitarian, Dr. Priestley, and destroyed, in a few hours, the gathered labours of many industrious years. A bread riot at Dundee was accompanied with a general shout for liberty and equality, and crowned by the planting of a tree of liberty, in faithful accordance with French example. In Ireland, the party of Wolfe Tone entered into secret correspondence with the Parisian Jacobins, with a view to establish a republic on the newest French model. Between those who saw unmixed evil in the Revolution, and those who exulted even in its wildest excesses, the lovers of genuine freedom, the friends of an honourable peace, had anything but an easy part to choose. The fainter-hearted and more passionate among these swung off into closer fellowship with the extreme royalists, while some few of the braver sort went just as far on the opposite and weaker side.

Pitt, for his part, spared no wise or honourable effort to keep his country out of the widening whirl-

pool of which Paris had become the centre. After the discrowning of Louis the Sixteenth, instead of at once declaring war, as Burke would have had him do, or rushing to acknowledge the new government, as a later ministry acknowledged that of the Third Napoleon, he simply recalled the English Ambassador, and while taking fit measures against the chance of a war, held himself quite ready to treat on fair terms with the National Convention. But French ambition, swollen by the triumphs of Kellerman and Dumouriez over the armies that came to punish France for her late disloyalty, threatened to turn its arms against other than its declared foes. By the decree of November, 1792, help was offered to every nation that desired to become free. Holland herself, our own ally, had previously been commanded to allow French ships of war the right of free sailing up the Scheldt and Meuse. Even then Pitt hung back. But in the beginning of 1793 no further choice was left him, even had he been as slavish a peacemonger as Mr. Cobden. The judicial murder of an utterly harmless king, on the 21st January, a murder memorable for the infernal treachery of a Royal Duke, and the selfish cowardice of several Girondist chiefs, thrilled every true English heart with unspeakable horror, and a keen desire for revenge. It was useless for Pitt to contend against a whole nation urging him on. While he was yet thinking what next to do, the die had been cast at Paris.

On the day before M. Chauvelin, the republican agent, received his Majesty's order to leave England, a like order had been sent off by his own government; and on the 1st February France formally declared war against England and Holland.

For the next nine years the war thus begun was carried on without a break, under the direction of Pitt himself. Lord Stanhope's present volumes bring us only to the end of the fourth year, by which time no great success had shone in Europe on the British arms. Still the narrative of these four years will allow us to foresee with tolerable clearness the upshot of Lord Stanhope's protest against the harsh judgment of Lord Macaulay. To which of these opponents should modern opinion lean, touching Pitt's character as a statesman during the war? Shall we say with Macaulay, that his foreign policy became henceforth as weak and niggling as his domestic policy showed itself unduly strong; that he gagged his countrymen at home with a series of "harsh laws, harshly executed," against the old freedom alike of person and of speech, while abroad he frittered away a world of English lives and treasure in half-hearted maintenance of a war whose real purport he failed to grasp? Or are we to hold with his present biographer, that Pitt betrayed no lack of statesmanlike vigour in his conduct of the war, nor any lack of cool-headed fairness in his management of home affairs; that he did all an able minister could do to insure the triumph of his

country's arms, and no more than a prudent Englishman should have done to maintain peace and social order throughout the realm? These are questions which every true patriot will seek to settle without reference to any foregone conclusions in favour of Whig or Tory politics. Far be it from us to rival the absurdity of Macaulay's efforts to prove the great minister a genuine Whig, by an equally absurd attempt to make him out an uncompromising Tory. His fame belongs to all England, and his memory should be handed down to future ages with that of all who have helped from time to time to bring special lustre on the English name. Let us agree to waive our party watchwords, and lay aside our party eyeglasses, when we examine the public doings of so great a man.

To begin with his foreign policy, where is the wisdom of Macaulay's discovery that Pitt had no choice between the policy of Burke and that of Fox, between going with the full tide of public feeling and essaying to stem it with all his might? Why should an English minister, who shrank from purchasing peace at any cost, be therefore driven to "proclaim a holy war for religion, morality, property, order, public law?" It was well enough for Burke, with his lively fancy and freedom from official cares, to raise the standard of a European crusade against the infamous regicides who had solemnised their saturnalia of crime and anarchy by tearing to pieces the fair young Princess de

Lamballe, and dragging the noble wife of the murdered Louis to the guillotine. But while Burke was thundering against Jacobins and bewailing the birth of an unchivalrous age, Pitt, the minister, had far other work to do. He was the sea-captain looking here and there, and giving his orders amidst the rising storm, while men like Burke gave special heed to the grandeur of the racing billows and the dirge-like shrieking of the wind. The orator would have gone to war for all humanity: the statesman found himself forced into a defensive war for the sake of his Dutch ally. The same faithful regard for treaties which sent our troops to the Crimea in 1854 sent also the Duke of York into Flanders in 1793. Gladly as Pitt would have kept the peace if he might, and deeply as he deplored the blow to our financial progress, he entered on the war with a thorough knowledge of the work cut out for him, and with a firm resolve to spare no effort that England's honour and the fierceness of her assailants might demand. He bound himself to make no peace with France until Austria should have recovered Belgium. An English army under the Duke of York rendered as much aid as ten thousand British soldiers, bravely if not skilfully led, could do to an alliance marred by divided counsels and bad generalship. The names of Howe and Hood betokened the coming success of British arms by sea. Had the allied commanders marched on Paris after the rout of General Dampierre, the war might

have been ended in its first year. At a later season Pitt would have secured the allies against fresh disaster by recommending Lord Cornwallis for the chief command. It was not his fault that Austrian greed inflamed the resistance which Austrian slowness had first provoked, that towns which the allies should never have stopped to attack were afterwards formally annexed to Austrian soil. It was not his fault that Prussia soon gave up her share of the fighting, and that Austria repeatedly showed marks of a weariness only to be relieved by fresh outpourings of British gold. It was not his fault that the allied garrison were driven out of Toulon under the skilful management of a young Corsican Lieutenant of Artillery, or that a large body of French emigrants, who had landed through our means at Quiberon, were doomed by the folly of their own officers to meet, most of them, a cruel death at the hands of their countrymen.

What Englishman could have foreseen that Pitt's dearest hopes and fresh swarms of slow-going Austrians were to be overthrown by the genius of a Bonaparte lighting up anew the smouldering fires of French ambition? Against our failures on the Continent may be set off our successes in America, in the East and West Indies, and a long list of naval triumphs, headed by the glorious First of June, 1794. Year after year did Pitt's unfailing energy, nerved by the trusting zeal of his countrymen at large, raise up new barriers to the strong

tide of warlike fanaticism that still continued to throw them down. Wherever the armed apostles of lawless might trampled on the commonest rights of kings and peoples in the names of Liberty and Reason, there, through her fleets, her armies, her lavish subsidies to weak or wavering allies, was England ever foremost in maintaining the cause of "religion, morality, property, order, public law." Throughout that long struggle, she alone fought for great ideas, unmarred by any views of material gain, or even to any large extent by the higher selfishness of fighting in her own immediate defence. Guided by the minister of her choice, whose early death stamped his counsels all the deeper in her heart, she held her way through good and evil report towards those crowning mercies of '14 and '15, which gave Europe a long rest from outward troubles, and disabled France for many years to come from renewing schemes of conquest as fatal in the issue to herself, as they had been dangerous at the outset to her neighbours. To cry out against Pitt for having failed to crush the enemy at once by a display of overwhelming force, is to censure Providence for raising up against him all sorts of hindrances in his own cabinet, in the royal closet, in the camps and courts of friendly or neutral powers, in the events that paved a way for the rise of Bonaparte, in the frowardness of the elements and the weaknesses of individual men, such as no power of human skill and foresight could have

enabled the cleverest statesman of that age and country to overcome.

On the charge of undue severity in his home administration, it is not so easy to make out a full defence. Yet here, too, we are bound to distinguish between Pitt's own acts and those of colleagues over whom he had no certain control, or of subordinates who strained a point or two by way of showing their fierce attachment to Church and State. Pitt was, perhaps, the most liberal member of his cabinet, even when it received the Whig accessions of 1794. We may hardly hold him to account for all the evil done by the brutal loyalty of Chief Justice Braxfield, or the new-born zeal of Lord Chancellor Loughborough. Probably he had not much to do with the many trials for treason and sedition, which brought out the long-winded eloquence of his Attorney-General, Sir John Scott, and the partisan hatreds of more than one presiding judge. From the King himself and his Chancellor, down to Windham and the future Lord Eldon, Pitt was surrounded by Anti-Jacobins of the most bigoted school, who filled his ear with the most alarming stories, and preached up the need of enforcing stern justice on wretches who dared to say a rash word against their appointed rulers or the religion of the land. The great body of the nation was not less frantic in its zeal for persecution. From every side came rumours of dark plots against the government, and reports of seditious speeches uttered by the

friends of French Terrorists and the disciples of Tom Paine. From Ireland the proofs of treason were yet more numerous and more damning. Perhaps too readily taking for granted all he heard from others, Pitt determined to avail himself of special remedies for an unwonted disease. By means of bills for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, for making certain acts treasonable, for the easier suppression of seditious meetings, he thought to cut down the first shootings of a weed that else would quickly overrun the whole fair garden intrusted to his charge.

It is no great reproach to Pitt if we allow that in this matter Fox and Sheridan were frequently right, even though the voices of five out of every six Englishmen would at the moment have loudly voted them in the wrong. Against each new infringement of the popular liberties these men protested, for reasons which most of us in these days are ready enough to apprehend. They refused to believe in the wisdom of a process which set aside established laws in order that a few rash blockheads might be raised by stern punishments to the rank of political martyrs. It was better, they thought, that the foul air should continue to find its way out of the usual crevices than be shut in to breed worse mischief at some future day. It was better that a few should talk foolishly than that the many should be taught to persecute all who claimed the right of thinking for themselves. The very smallness of

the party that voted with Fox and Sheridan in the one house, and Lord Stanhope in the other, against the immense majorities that Pitt could always muster, seemed of itself to prove the folly of taking strong measures against a yet smaller sprinkling of Jacobin sympathisers out of doors. In Ireland, indeed, where the danger was greater, Pitt's policy was for some time comparatively mild, perhaps because he had included this island in his studies of strategy and foreign politics. It was in England that he showed himself least true to his general principles, or else most weakly desirous to please the King. For, to the last, his Majesty was determined to govern as well as to reign, and Pitt may, here as elsewhere, have reasoned himself into a compromise that still left him the lion's share of actual power, while it promised to save his country from yet worse dangers, whether on the side of kingly despotism, or of a party not more vehement in its support of Jacobin ideas than clamorous in its demands for an early peace. Whatever may be thought regarding his own conduct, it is only fair to allow for the many hindrances to a worthier course, and to ask, in the event of his open disagreement with all around him, whether England would have gained or lost the most by his consequent retreat from office.

In the second year of the war happened for Burke the great bereavement which darkened the short remainder of his life. Even as Pitt was making out the patent for turning the veteran statesman into

Lord Beaconsfield, died, on the 2nd August, 1794, that only and well-beloved son, for whose sake alone the honour was worth enjoying. Refusing the title, the broken-hearted father would take only a pension large enough to pay his debts and keep his wife in comfort for the rest of their sorrowing days. Henceforth brooding over his own great loss, he gave but little heed to the affairs of his father-land, just then resounding with the eloquent speeches of Grattan in favour of yet larger relief for Roman Catholics from their old penal laws. In England, the heavy taxation needed for the war heightened the distress which two years of scarcity were certain to engender; and angry or starving mobs turned their fury against the crimping-houses which lured away fresh recruits for an army that seemed doomed to continual defeat. Pitt's measures to relieve the distress were wise and promptly taken. But in spite of suffering at home and partial failure abroad, the only peace that an English minister could then have made was not to be, until the death of that Russian Czar whose accession closes the first instalment of Lord Stanhope's present work.

THE LATTER YEARS OF WILLIAM PITT.

EARL STANHOPE'S first two volumes brought the life of his great hero down to the latter end of 1796, the fourth year of the French war. At that time England was suffering under the weight of gloom caused by two years of bad harvests and unsuccessful warfare. At home, the lack of food and the ever-growing taxation heightened the political ferment born of past misrule and passing changes in the neighbouring states. Abroad, our fleets maintained their old renown, but our armies knew more of defeat than victory under a General of his Majesty's choosing, and our allies made no good use of the monies supplied them from the British Treasury. On the Russian throne there sat an emperor in whose good-will no trust could ever be placed. Holland had thrown herself into the arms of France. Ireland was rife with plots and tokens of coming storm.

Just at this juncture Pitt revelled in a dream of happiness, as sweet for the moment as it proved

barren of outward fruit. In his leisure days at Holwood he had learned to love the eldest daughter of his friend, Lord Auckland, whose house at Beckenham stood not far from his own. But the lover's poverty forced him to give up all hope of marrying a young lady whose own lack of fortune seemed, in her father's eyes, sufficient reason for accepting a plea, which many a less prudent father would have been proud to waive for the sake of him who here offered it. Looking at what might befal his child in the event of Pitt's dying or losing his place, his lordship agreed with his friend in thinking it best that the affair should go no further. What the lady herself thought or felt about it we are not told; but for the present Holwood and Beckenham became as distant as they had erewhile been near. His lordship and Pitt remained friends; the latter set himself to bear his burden as he best could; and two years after Miss Eden gave her hand to Lord Hobart, afterwards Earl of Buckinghamshire. Whatever Pitt may have suffered, he was not the man to fall into a wild despair. And another burden was on him, which just then must have given his thoughts a welcome diversion. There was no time for love-sickness when the ship of government needed a bold and watchful pilot at the helm. Throughout the whole of 1797 England's fate continually hung in a balance, which something more than human statesmanship kept from turning to the wrong side. Bad weather and a difficult coast

baffled the efforts of General Hoche to effect a landing in Ireland, after his fleet had slipped past the British cruisers watching for him off the coast of Brittany. But in February, there landed in Fishguard Bay a body of twelve hundred blackguards, the sweepings of French prisons and galleys, sent forth with a commission to take Bristol and burn it to the ground. This noble scheme of just vengeance, as it appeared to Wolfe Tone and other of the Irish rebels, was happily crushed betimes by the appearance on the coast of several hundred volunteers and militia, besides a pretty good muster of Pembrokeshire countryfolk, armed with their own tools and such weapons as they could on the moment find. Misliking the state of things in front, and mistaking, it is said, the red cloaks of the Welshwomen for the red coats of British infantry, the "Black Legion" surrendered at discretion without a blow. A yet worse danger was turned aside by the happy daring of Sir John Jervis, who, with his small fleet of fifteen ships, part of them led by Commodore Nelson, broke through the Spanish line of twenty-five, and gained the victory for which Nelson was knighted and Jervis made an earl. Driven out of Italy by the resistless General Bonaparte, her very capital lying at his mercy, Austria found herself, by the middle of April, fain to accept of a peace, which gave her conqueror Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine. About the same time, Pitt was carrying through Parliament a bill confirming

the famous Order in Council of February, by which the Bank of England had been allowed to suspend its payments in cash. So bold a measure for stopping a drain of gold, which else, in all likelihood, must have ended in a national bankruptcy, had, of course, its fierce opponents in the party of Fox; but the need of the moment brooked no delay; the monied men of London were all on Pitt's side; and the party of Fox had no chance whatever against a minister strong at once in his parliamentary following and in the moral support of his countrymen out of doors. The bill was to have force for only a few months; but so well did it seem to work, and so ready were the people of England to do whatever was deemed best for the ultimate good of all, that its renewal from time to time became a thing of course while the war lasted.

Before this measure had become law, our Austrian ally had left us in the lurch, and a mutiny had broken out among our own seamen at Spithead. So well was it planned, so firmly, yet temperately, carried on, and so just were the men's demands, that the Government yielded with a good grace; and after one or two hitches, caused partly by the bad taste of certain officers, partly by the men's deep-rooted distrust of the Admiralty, a royal pardon for the mutineers, accompanied by a bill for increasing the seamen's pay and allowances, won them back to the allegiance, which, indeed, they

had never in their hearts forsworn. In one of the ships there had been some talk of downright desertion to the enemy; but the sailors' delegates at once took the most determined steps to show their abhorrence of language so rarely heard among British seamen. What happened at Portsmouth and St. Helen's, however, became the signal for a yet more dangerous mutiny at Sheerness. While Lord Bridport's fleet was weighing anchor for a cruise off the Breton coast, Richard Parker, the ringleader at Sheerness, was sending out to the Admiralty from the fleet he had taken down to the Nore, demands so extravagant and so imperiously worded, that no Government worthy of the name would stoop to yield them, were the peril never so great. From the ships, the mutinous spirit had found its way among the artillerymen at Woolwich, and the invalids at Sheerness. Brave old Admiral Duncan, who was blockading the Dutch ports, one morning found himself forsaken by all his ships but two, and only by making false signals prevented the enemy from taking advantage of his isolation. The English funds fell down to 48, the lowest at which they had ever been quoted. It was an anxious time for the bravest, but Pitt's courage never failed, and Sheridan's good counsels fell on willing ears. Offers of pardon having failed to check the mutiny, it was resolved to put it down by force. Some faithful ships were still at hand; troops were sent down both banks of the Thames; gunboats were got ready, and no

trouble was found in manning them. The King himself called on his Parliament for strong measures against the mutineers. A timely boldness on one side and a growing sense of shame for past wrong-doing on the other, conspired to save England from the worst danger she had yet encountered through all that century. Wearied of the tyranny enforced by their new commanders, solemnly reproached for their disloyalty by the fleets at Plymouth and Spithead, disheartened by the movements going on around them, and the evident lack of sympathy with their cause on shore, ship's crew after ship's crew returned to their duty, until, on the 13th June, Parker's own vessel, the *Sandwich*, was brought under the land-batteries by the last remaining body of mutineers. Once more Admiral Duncan blockaded the Texel with a force which needed no help from human cunning, and on the 30th of June Parker himself, from the yard-arm of his own ship, underwent the doom he seems to have richly deserved.

That during these troublous weeks Pitt maintained his wonted coolness and proud self-reliance, while the minds of weaker men were failing them for fear, we may well believe without seeing, for our part, any sure proof thereof in the story told by Lord Stanhope, of Pitt's being once found fast asleep a few minutes after one of his colleagues had brought him news of a very serious import. A man of weak health, tired out with a hard day's

work, and heavy, perhaps, with strong wine taken to recruit his jaded powers, would have shown himself unusually wanting either in common sense or calm self-control, if he had refrained from resuming his slumber when no special good could come of his keeping awake.

About three weeks after the quelling of the mutiny died Edmund Burke, having lived just long enough to see England brought safely out of a perilous strait, and the leaders of his old party deserting their post of duty in the House of Commons. His last political effort, while he lay ill at Bath, had been the advising Government, through his friend Windham, to make no compromise with the Spithead mutineers. Luckily for the nation advice so intemperate did not prevail, else the dying statesman might really have lived to see, in his own words, "an end of all that is worth living for in this world." Happily, on the other hand, for the veteran Irishman, he escaped the sorrow of living among the sad events which bloodstained the history of Ireland during the following year.

In the same month of July we find Pitt backing his friend Wilberforce's efforts to gain for Roman Catholics the right of entering the militia. Carried through the Commons, this just and wise measure was thrown out by the Lords; the head of the Foreign Office, Lord Grenville, having deeply angered his friend and colleague by voting on the other side. A few weeks earlier Pitt had with diffi-

culty gained his Sovereign's consent to a renewal of negotiations with the French Directory. Looking at the peace which Austria had just made with France, and at the growing tightness of the English money market, he felt that no false pride or theoretical hatred of Jacobin ideas should bar him from seeking, by worthy means, to end "so bloody and wasting a war." In spite of Grenville's frequent chafing and the shiftiness of the French government, things were beginning to look peaceable, when a change of government at Paris, followed by a change of envoys at Lille, ended in Lord Malmesbury's leaving the latter place emptyhanded on the 18th September. He had hardly returned home when Pitt received from Barras a secret offer of peace on his own terms, if a sum of two millions could be paid over to Barras and his friends. This treaty also, though taken up at the time by the English minister, somehow fell soon afterwards to the ground.

On the 20th September—the very day of Lord Malmesbury's arrival—Pitt received a sad shock in the news of his kinsman Eliot's death, at the early age of thirty-nine. His grief at the loss of one so dear to him was declared by his friend Rose to "exceed conception." Only seven months before had Eliot been prevented, by a severe illness, from accepting the post of Governor-General of India, for which both Dundas and Lord Cornwallis had specially marked him out. Trials like these must

have gone far to bring on the frequent headaches and other signs of failing health, to which Pitt's letters of this period now and then allude. Some quiet weeks, however, spent in the bracing air of Walmer and the society of occasional friends, restored him to such health as he was ever allowed to enjoy. The lounging rides, "which pretended to be called shooting," did for his body what social intercourse and spinning verses did for his mind. His paraphrase of Horace's noble stanzas beginning with "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," was probably written about this time. It reflects so happily his own character, that we may well be excused for quoting a set of lines in them selves not at all unworthy of the original:—

"How bless'd, how glorious, they who bravely fall,
Their lives devoted, at their country's call!
Death, too, pursues the coward as he flies;
The dart o'ertakes him, and disgraced he dies.
No mean repulse intrepid virtue knows;
Spotless and pure her native splendour glows;
No gaudy ensigns hers, of borrow'd power;
No fame dependent on the varying hour:
Bow'd to no yoke, her honours are her own,
Nor court the breath of popular renown.
On wing sublime resistless virtue soars,
And, spurning human haunts and earthly shores,
To those whom godlike deeds forbid to die,
Unbars the gates of immortality."

That he who wrote these lines might also have written the good things by common report ascribed to him in the *Anti-Jacobin*, the first number of

which came out in November of this year, it is not hard to believe; but his biographer having looked in vain for any "positive or contemporaneous testimony" to such a fact, doubts, not wholly without reason, whether Pitt added even one line to a serial whose wit and cleverness, however flat their savour in these days, did, at the time, succeed in turning the laugh against those who had long had it all their own way. One story connected with Canning's new venture serves to illustrate the tact and readiness of his great master. Among the guests at a Ministerial party was a Mr. George Ellis, once a writer in the *Rolliad*, but now a follower of Pitt and a foremost contributor to the *Anti-Jacobin*. Being called on by somebody to tell them all about the former poem, he "seemed a little embarrassed," until Pitt, with a good-humoured smile, leaned forward and quoted a line from Dido's speech to her new guest:—

"Immo age et a primâ dic, hospes, origine nobis"——

thoughtfully leaving unsaid the "erroresque tuos" which came soon after.

Among the guests this autumn at Walmer Castle was Lord Mornington, who, having gone to receive his last instructions before sailing for India as the new Governor-General, found "Mr. Pitt in the highest spirits, entertaining officers and country gentlemen with his usual hospitality." Not the least pleasant of those he met there was Admiral

Duncan, whose fleet then lay in the Downs, and who, a few weeks later, was again to find a hearty welcome under the same roof as Lord Duncan, hero of the hard-fought battle of Camperdown. This heavy blow to the Dutch fleet put an end to all fears of a French invasion for some time to come. To commemorate the victories lately won at sea over three hostile nations, by Howe, Jervis, and Duncan, a special service was held at St. Paul's on the 19th December. A long train of high dignitaries passed on to the great cathedral, through a crowd of respectful onlookers. One man alone—and he the one who least deserved such treatment—was exposed to serious insult by the way. Pitt's new budget, inevitable as it seemed to be, had roused the popular feeling against its author. Instead of returning with the others after the service, he stayed to dine with the Speaker in Doctors' Commons, and went home in the evening escorted by a body of London Light Horse.

During the last two years no fewer than thirty names had been added to the British peerage, a fact in itself by no means creditable either to King or ministry, but one which some of Pitt's enemies dressed in colours much darker than the truth. It has been said, for instance, that Lord Carrington gained his honours in return for a bribe of money to the minister himself. This charge his biographer has quite exploded, for the benefit rather of the supposed giver than of him who was said to have

received the money. For in all dispassionate eyes Pitt's honour needed no clearing from a charge so utterly at variance with the known facts of his career. He might be too ready to give away peerages for service done to the state; but the man who had more than once refused to mend his fortunes by means entirely fair, who had declined pecuniary help from the merchants of London, from his private friends, and was driven sorely against his will to accept the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports, could no more think of selling peerages for his private gain, than of joining the United Irishmen in acts of treason against the empire.

The next year, 1798, opened with some striking scenes. The Duke of Norfolk got turned out of his Lord Lieutenancy for having, on Fox's birthday, preached sedition at the Crown and Anchor, and varied the usual toasts by drinking to "The Majesty of the People." On the other hand, there now began to flow into the National Exchequer a stream of free-will offerings, which on the very first day amounted to 46,000 pounds, and by the year's end had added two millions to the revenue raised by other means. The men who already bore much the largest share of the fiscal burdens, were daily thronging to the Exchange with gifts ranging from a guinea to 3,000 pounds. Merchants, bankers, members of Parliament, squires, manufacturers, peers, gave according to their several wills and means; the King himself leading the way with a

promise of 20,000 pounds a-year from his privy purse. The Bank of England subscribed two hundred thousand pounds. The great Sir Robert Peel's father, then junior partner in a calico mill at Bury, on the spur of the moment, paid in ten thousand pounds, and then going back to Bury, with some fear of having overshot the mark, told his partner what he had done. "You might as well," was the reassuring answer, "have made it twenty thousand while you were about it." Meanwhile the North of Ireland having had its turn of rebellion the year before, a yet more fearful one now burst forth in the South, unchecked by the timely arrest of its chief authors. Wexford became the centre of a fierce struggle. Deeds of frightful cruelty were done on either side; the leaders, whether loyalist or rebel, being commonly powerless, even when they had the will, to stay their maddened followers' hands. Anxious to do the best he could at such a crisis, Pitt sent Lord Cornwallis to the scene of danger, as both Lord Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief. A better man he could not have appointed for the work of suppressing a fearful outbreak, and restraining the vengeful madness of his own allies. General Lake's grand scattering of the rebels at Vinegar Hill, on the 21st June, the day after his Lordship's arrival at the Castle, left the latter not much to do in the one direction; but there remained to him the far harder task of teaching Irish loyalists to temper victory with a due display of forbear-

ance. How, aided only by the Irish Chancellor, Lord Clare, and the new Irish Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, he carried out the wiser policy in spite of the murmurs of all around him, need not be told here. Nor is this the place to show how heartily, when all fear of present danger from the French was over, he set himself to further Pitt's plan for effecting a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.

In May of this year we find Pitt consulting with Dundas what kind of notice should be taken of an inflammatory speech, in which Fox had outdone the Duke of Norfolk on the same stage. At length it was agreed that the culprit's name should be struck off the list of Privy Councillors. Towards the end of the same month Pitt himself was called out by Tierney, the then leader of the opposition, for having refused to withdraw some offensive words used by him in debate, and demurred to at the time by the Speaker. In due time a duel took place at Wimbledon, and, after firing two shots each in vain, the pair parted without further ill-will. This warlike meeting happened on a Sunday. The next day Pitt wrote his mother a few lines, just to set her anxious heart at ease. His conduct in this matter gave birth to comments of various kinds. One party, headed by the King himself, who betrayed a friendly concern for his minister's safety, was shocked at the risk so recklessly run by a public servant, whose life belonged in a special manner to his country alone.

Others were even more shocked at seeing a man of Pitt's mark so ready to indulge in a practice utterly opposed to all rules of Christian morality. But for Pitt's earnest remonstrances, his friend Wilberforce would even have brought forward in the House of Commons a motion, of which, indeed, he had given the usual notice, for the prevention of duelling on the part of ministers. An attack of gout, and other symptoms of a frame diseased, followed if it did not directly spring from the foolish business about which so much stir was made. Throughout that midsummer, Pitt's health continued so shaky, that his Majesty repeatedly urged him to take a few weeks' holiday at some inland watering-place. In the middle of July, Wilberforce found him at Holwood, much better, and "improved in his habits also;" by which he probably meant to say that Pitt rose earlier, and drank less wine than he had lately been wont to do. But change of air was still needed for such an invalid, and Pitt was enabled to spend the month of August partly at Walmer, and partly at Burton Pynsent with his mother. About the middle of September we find him again at Walmer, cheered with good news from Ireland, and watching eagerly for the tidings, which had already been dimly rumoured, of Nelson's glorious victory in the Bay of Aboukir.

A word by the way on one of those habits to which Wilberforce doubtless referred. That Pitt sometimes took more wine than was good for him,

the known custom of his day would almost lead us to take for granted, if his friends themselves had not owned the general fact. But it seems equally clear that wine to him was a needful tonic, that his head, in drinking phrase, was strong, and that neither the public business nor his public speeches were found to suffer from his peculiar weakness. Once only, it is said, could his friends discover an excess of vinous ferment in their leader's oratory; and that was when he rose one evening after dinner to answer a personal attack upon himself. Next day the Clerk-Assistant of the House told the Speaker that Pitt's extravagance of the night before had given him a violent headache. On hearing of this Pitt laughingly declared it to be an excellent arrangement: "I had the wine and the clerk got the headache."

The great battle of the Nile, for which Nelson was made a baron only, while Jervis, for a much smaller victory, had gained an earldom, checkmated Bonaparte in Egypt by making England mistress of the Mediterranean. Cut off from his home succours he might still for a time press forward, triumphant everywhere, save when the pluck of an English ship's crew under Sidney Smith heartened the resistance of their Turkish allies. When he himself returned with a few friends to France, his lieutenants might still hold their ground against the rabble that sought to overpower them. But an army thus left to its own resources must soon have

melted away in fruitless fighting or been driven to treat for terms, even had British troops not found their way at last to the scene of action. As it happened, these completed in the spring of 1801 the good work began by Nelson's sailors in the autumn of 1798. For the measures which led to the Battle of Alexandria and the final surrender of General Menou's wasted army, it is but fair, as Lord Stanhope urges, that Pitt's government should reap its full share of praise, in having planned what the Addington ministry were enabled to carry out.

Meanwhile, however, the war raged, and more funds were needed by the English minister. In 1799 the Assessed Taxes were exchanged for a general Income Tax of ten per cent. on all incomes above two hundred a-year, of something less by degrees on all incomes below two hundred and above sixty-five pounds. Of course the measure was abused by one set for favouring the landlords, by another for favouring the monied men. Again too was use made of freewill offerings, many persons subscribing sums far beyond their lawful assessment. Pitt and Dundas in this way gave each two thousand a year, a sum which the former at least, had his name in the country been less prominent, might justly have been blamed for devoting to other uses than the payment of his private debts. The question of funds for the year being settled, Pitt addressed himself to the scheme of an early union with Ireland. A message from his

Majesty to that effect was delivered in the English Parliament on the same day that Lord Cornwallis opened the subject in College-green. Undaunted by a virtual defeat in the Irish Commons, Pitt followed up his opening move with a string of resolutions explained and enforced in a speech so powerful and well-reasoned, that Wilberforce, till then doubting which way to vote, determined straightway to support his friend. In this speech was clearly marked out the policy which Pitt would have had his countrymen pursue towards the bulk of their fellow-subjects in the sister island. After some keen but fruitless debating in the Lower House, the resolutions passed the Lords without a division. In Ireland, however, things went not quite so smoothly. The Parliament of College-green had yet to be moulded into a proper mood of self-sacrificing loyalty: great landlords could not be expected to give up their political patronage without some return: the barristers and tradesmen of Dublin vied with the Orangemen of the North in their efforts to avert a change so likely to tell against the pockets of one party and the pride of the other. It was not till the beginning of next year that Castlereagh once more ventured to take the sense of the Lower House, on a question which few there present had probably once thought of regarding from a thoroughly unselfish point of view.* By this time, however, the Irish Government had made sure of its game; and neither the eloquence of Grattan nor the still nume-

rous array of his supporters availed to undo the spells woven for their discomfiture during the past year. In April the Irish resolutions were laid before the English Parliament; a Bill of Union founded thereon was speedily carried through both Houses, and on the 2nd July, 1800, His Majesty's assent gave the crowning blow to a state of things which no unbiassed patriot would now wish to see restored.

But we must return for a moment to the year before, in which, on the whole, success had smiled on our arms and those of our allies. In India, Lord Wellesley had begun his conquering career by the siege and capture of Seringapatam, Tippoo Sahib paying with his life and throne for his foolish plottings with the French Republic. Bonaparte's absence in Egypt, and a sudden change of feeling in the Russian emperor's mind, had conspired to drive the French out of nearly the whole of Italy. A British army under Abercromby landed in Holland, and cut off the Dutch fleet in the Texel; but after the Duke of York took command of the allied British and Russian force, it was natural to expect the failures which really wound up that short campaign. Even had the Duke been a better general, Pitt's plan of freeing Holland from French rule could hardly have prospered in the face of so cold a welcome as the people generally gave to their supposed deliverers. That part, however, of his plan which concerned the Dutch fleet, had been well accomplished by the seizure of thirteen men-of-war—

the last wrecks of that armament which Duncan had first shattered two years before. Among the higher officers who served that autumn under the Duke was Pitt's elder brother, Lord Chatham, whose name, a few years later, was to grow too famous in connexion with the ill-starred expedition to the Scheldt. But a few days after the British army had been fain to bargain for its safe retreat from the country was sent to save, an event of far more fatal meaning happened in France. On the 9th November, Bonaparte, newly returned from Egypt, overthrew the feeble government which had risen on the ruins of Robespierre's Reign of Terror, and made himself virtual ruler of France under the modest title of First Consul.

Straightway a marked change came over the fortunes of the war in Europe. While Pitt and his colleagues in Ireland were pushing forward their Bill of Union, the First Consul was leading a French army over the Alps, to beat the Austrians on the plains of Marengo, and regain, in a few short weeks, every foot of ground lost to the French in Italy the year before. In Germany Moreau worthily followed his master's lead. The Russian emperor had once more changed his mind, and sent no army to help the Austrians. By July Napoleon was back in Paris, and the defeated Austrians were glad enough to accept a truce during the summer. Pitt too was once more ready to treat for a general peace; but in his own cabinet there was no agree-

ment about the terms, some wishing to restore the Bourbons, others objecting to any peace with a revolutionary government, and Dundas for one maintaining that England should treat for herself alone, should stand on the ground which her recent victories entitled her to take. As for the King himself, nothing could ever persuade him that the war had raged long enough, while a trace of the French Revolution remained in Europe. Pitt, however, desired only such a peace as might tend to preserve a balance between the states of Europe, without trenching on the right of nations to choose their own forms of government. In August, therefore, he also made advances which led to much correspondence, but nothing beyond. After six weeks of projects and counterprojects, the negotiations fell through for want of agreement about preliminary terms. This new disappointment, coming on the top of many anxious thoughts regarding the pressure caused by a bad harvest, did not tend to allay the illness under which the minister was again suffering. A few weeks' stay however, at Woodley, with his friend Addington, enabled him in November to begin the new session of Parliament with the discussion of means for relieving the present scarcity, and encouraging the growth of corn in England. Here, for once, his usual good sense seems to have failed him; and in spite of Grenville's earnest dissuasions, measures like the Brown Bread Bill were ordained for forcibly deranging the natural process

by which prices fluctuate with every change in the mutual relations of supply and demand. Let us add, however, that he still avowed his old attachment to free trade as a general rule, and sternly set his face against all demands for limiting by law the highest price of corn, or punishing those who raised its market value by withholding the stores they had already amassed.

When the United Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland met for the first time, on the 22nd January, 1801, the political horizon had grown yet darker than before. The snows of Hohenlinden had just been stained with the slaughter of another Austrian army. In wrath at our holding Malta, which he claimed for his own as head of the knights of St. John, the crazy Czar Paul had seized some hundreds of British shipping, and persuaded the Scandinavian powers to join him in maintaining an armed neutrality, which meant, in fact, a defensive league against England alone. But these, after all, were things of small moment compared with another cloud which hung right overhead. On the 28th January, His Majesty, according to his unkingly wont, told Dundas that he should reckon, "as his personal enemy," whoever should bring forward any such measure as that which Lord Castlereagh was said to have been discussing with Pitt. This measure was the one which Pitt and the Lord Lieutenant had long held out to the Roman Catholics as sure, at no distant date, to follow the union of the two

kingdoms. The King was determined to refuse the least concession of their claims rather than give up his own reading of his Coronation Oath. Misled, perhaps, by his master's previous silence, and trusting to his own powers of persuasion when the time for speaking out should have come, Pitt had said nothing to the King about the plans which he and his colleagues were still engaged in perpending among themselves. Unluckily, he had not suspected that there was a traitor in the camp. His Chancellor, Lord Loughborough, a man of even less principle than Lord Thurlow, had, last autumn, taken advantage of the royal presence at Weymouth to betray the secrets contained in a confidential letter from the first minister, and to confirm the King in holding that view of his Coronation Oath which even his Attorney-General, the future Lord Eldon, had, five years before, pronounced untenable. Hence it happened that now, instead of the former concert, Pitt found half his cabinet siding with the Lord Chancellor. Presently Addington, at the King's request, tried to dissuade his friend from further movement in a matter about which His Majesty's wrath could hardly keep itself under any control. Pitt, however, had gone too far to stop short without loss of honour. In a letter full of eloquent reasoning, he tried in vain to soften the King's heart. His Majesty would only offer such a compromise as no honourable man, in Pitt's position, could have accepted. On the 5th February, the former gave

an unwilling assent to his servant's prayer for dismissal; and thus, after many years of loyal service to his King and country, the ablest minister and most highminded statesman of that long reign fell a sacrifice to the jealousy or the timeserving of a few false friends, and the mistaken firmness of a well-meaning but narrow-minded sovereign.

While the Speaker, Mr. Addington, was forming a makeshift ministry with the help of Pitt's smaller colleagues, the late ministry still carried on the business of the day. Pitt opened out his budget for the coming year, and Lord Cornwallis, at his request, did all he could to pacify the Roman Catholics of Ireland. It is pleasant to remember that Lord Loughborough gained nothing by his late treachery. On the other hand, the poor King's anxieties, torn as he was between an honest regard for his oath and the need of parting with a friend who had served him so long and so ably, drove him, ere long, into a state of mental disorder, resembling the seizure of 1789. Before the end of February there was some talk about a Regency. By the 6th of March, however, his Majesty had so far recovered as to send Pitt a message, telling of his renewed health, but upbraiding the other for having caused his illness. So deeply was the latter moved by these unfair, but to him grave reproaches, that he begged Dr. Willis to assure the King, that during the rest of his reign this vexing question should never again be mooted by Mr. Pitt. Grateful to

the private feelings of a minister whom the King had long valued as a personal friend, must have been the joy his answer gave to the worthy old couple at Court. But was he justified, as a patriotic statesman, in foregoing all further efforts to arrest the discontent of a whole nation, because by any other line of action one man's wits might possibly be deranged for ever? At the worst, however, this was an amiable weakness; and it is not unlikely that Pitt may have been further swayed, either by reflections on His Majesty's ripe age, or by fears of what might happen to the country if the Prince of Wales, whose character he heartily loathed, were too early seated in his good father's throne.

Pitt's friends now hoped to place him once more at the helm of state. But nothing would persuade him to return, unless the King and the new minister both asked him back of their own accord. Luckily for his own fame, no such step was then taken. His act of retirement preserved its true character, a willing sacrifice of self to an overpowering sense of duty. The conditions on which his friends believed him willing to re-enter office, he himself doubtless knew to be unfeasible. As it was, he gave to the world a bright example of the self-denying patriot, who, when fortune frowned on him, could "wrap himself in his virtue, and take up honest poverty without a dower."

On the 14th March Pitt gave up the seals to his master, who received him with "the utmost possible

kindness," and prayed that he might still be visited as a friend; an honour which the former prudently declined. His own retirement was accompanied by that of Cornwallis, Castlereagh, Canning, Dundas, and the faithfullest of all his followers, Mr. Rose; while several others would hold office in the new government only at his most urgent request. Lord Wellesley himself, from his high post in India, wrote him a letter full of the warmest friendship, and expressing his readiness to share his chief's retirement as soon as another viceroy could be sent out in his stead. In Addington the King found a pleasant courtier, but it was mainly to Pitt himself that all men, including the King and his new minister, looked for guidance in matters of special weight. Without him the feeble government, headed by the "doctor's son," could hardly have lived a day. With his help, as given both in public speeches and private counsel, it struggled on through the short years of peace, until, with the return of war, came a general cry for the minister in whom alone the nation trusted to carry it on. The very first days of the Addington ministry were signalized by successes to which the former government had led the way. Through Nelson's glorious daring, in defiance of orders at the battle of Copenhagen, the Northern Coalition received a shattering blow, but a few days after the fate of the French in Egypt had been settled by Abercromby's life-bought victory at Alexandria.

While the French and English governments were engaged this summer in treating for peace in the midst of warlike movements on either side, Pitt was reaping the just reward of long-continued carelessness about his household affairs. Plundered for years past by his own servants, and never giving himself the trouble to make even a show of putting his house in order, he had sunk far deeper into debt than Sheridan ever sank at the worst of times. Creditors began to plague a man who owed £45,000, and, once out of office, could hardly have scraped together three thousand a year. His friends and admirers took counsel with each other what should be done. Some of them proposed a parliamentary grant. Of this, however, Pitt would not hear a word: had he left the country peaceful and prosperous, such an offer might not, he said, have been out of place; but as things were, the idea was utterly opposed to his own feelings. Once more the merchants of London begged him, as they had done in 1789, to accept a freewill subscription of a hundred thousand pounds. This offer too, with some show of reason, was once more declined. The King himself came forward with an offering of thirty thousand from his privy purse, an offering made through Rose with a delicacy which could not have been surpassed. Never had Rose seen his friend so moved as when he heard of his sovereign's noble act; but to him also Pitt remained inexorable. At last he agreed to accept a few thousand pounds,

contributed by a few of his personal friends, which, with the sale of Holwood, enabled him to satisfy the more urgent claims. The joke he had uttered against Fox some years before might now have been taken up against himself. When some one in Pitt's company had expressed a wonder how Fox would take the subscription his friends were secretly making for him—"Take it?"—said Pitt—"why, I suppose that he will take it quarterly, or perhaps it may be half-yearly!"

In the autumn Pitt was again in town, helping to draw up the terms of that treaty of peace which some knowing critics have, from time to time, charged him with resigning office sooner than bring about. While Fox, with his usual factiousness, publicly rejoiced at a peace so "glorious to the French Republic," his nobler rival thought only of the rest his country would now enjoy from a war which, on her side, had only been undertaken for purposes of self-defence and in regard for solemn treaties. Both before and after the last signing of the Peace of Amiens, in March, 1802, attacks were frequently made in Parliament, now by the more violent Tories against the terms of peace, now by the violent Radicals against divers measures of the late government. As a private member, Pitt no longer troubled himself to attend debates of trifling moment; but whenever the new ministry needed a helping word, or his presence might check the rashness of his old fellowers, he was pretty sure to be

found in his place. Once however, perhaps of set purpose, he missed receiving to his own face the highest compliment that has ever been paid to any minister by any House of Commons. In answer to the repeated attacks of an opposition maddened by the sense of its own weakness, an immense majority carried a special vote of thanks to the Right Hon. William Pitt, for the "great and important services" he had rendered his country. A few days after, on the 28th May, a great banquet was held at Merchant Taylors' Hall in honour of Pitt's birthday, and during the evening was sung that spirited song, in which Canning had only expressed the national feeling towards "the pilot that weathered the storm."

Once more the Clerkship of the Pells became vacant through the death, in July, of Colonel Barré, and once more Pitt refused to take so fat a sinecure, as Addington wished him, for himself. Surely there was some flaw—let us say it without a sneer—in that fine sense of honour which scorned to take money for no work done, yet felt no shame in running up bills far exceeding the debtor's power to pay!

Pitt's life for some time forward seems to have been a thoroughly happy one. At Walmer Castle he busied himself in all kinds of outdoor amusement—riding, sailing, shooting, farming, until another fit of illness obliged him, at Sir Walter Farquhar's urgent entreaty, to try for the first time the waters of Bath.

Before starting thither, in November, he received a curious letter from Louis Philippe, then Duke of Orleans, who, pointing out the strategic importance of Switzerland to the Allies, offered to take command of the whole Swiss army. From Bath he counselled Addington to give Bonaparte no good grounds of offence, but at the same time to keep England ready for the war, which might at any moment be once more forced upon her hands. Canning and some other of his friends began just then to show an unwise zeal in plotting for his return to power; but Pitt no sooner heard of the mischief brewing, than he strongly besought them to give over. Erelong he ceased to furnish the Cabinet with counsel, the full means of forming which were not always within his reach. At every sound of political action, however, his ears would prick up like those of an old war-horse at the distant blare of a trumpet. One day some rash speech of Canning's would make him for a moment sore, for fear of its endangering the good-will between himself and Addington. On another he would treat Lord Malmesbury, by way of talk, to an extemporised retort on Fox for some outbreak of more than usual virulence on the part of a statesman consistent only in his antagonism to Pitt. Again, we find him sending Canning a message of hearty praise for a speech of peculiar merit, and forgiving Sheridan's pretended abuse of himself for the heavy blows he had thereby cunningly managed to

deal at Fox. From London, however, and from steady political work, he was persuaded for several months to keep quite aloof, varying his stay at Bath with visits to his mother and to divers friends, with whom his evenings were passed in cheerful talk; sometimes, as with Canning, in looking over some Greek or Roman author, and not seldom, as with the Malmesbury ladies, in playing at *Speculation*, the new round game of cards. For Lord Malmesbury was not the only one who found Pitt "the pleasantest companion possible at and after dinner."*

At the beginning of 1803 he was again at Walmer, laid up for several days with an attack of gout and bile. By this time Bonaparte was already driving us, by his bad faith and restless ambition, either to maintain a dishonourable peace or to make ready for another war. No one had been more anxious than Pitt to insure his country at least a few years of peace; but no one saw more clearly into the First Consul's nature, or was less inclined to put up with his hectoring ways. Accordingly, he urged the Government, through his brother Lord Chatham, not to dream of surrendering Malta until Bonaparte had thoroughly changed his tone and his tactics. In March he writes again to urge that prompt means should be used to forearm the country

* So popular was Pitt throughout the country, that when he reached Shepton Mallet, in Lord Bath's carriage, the people who had come in to market, took out the horses, and drew the carriage themselves on the spur of the moment to the inn.

against a sudden attack on the part of a neighbour whose plans were every day becoming more clear. Of course, when things began to look serious, the cry for Pitt as Prime Minister waxed louder than ever. By way of satisfying it, Addington at first proposed a new Cabinet, headed by the utterly feeble Lord Chatham, with himself and Pitt for Secretaries of State. Dundas, now become Lord Melville, sounded Pitt on this matter over their port wine, and returned more openly to the charge the next day. But Pitt, who knew his own worth, and more and more disliked the financial policy of his successors, would hear nothing of a plan which gave to one minister the lead in Council, and to another the first place at his Majesty's private ear. Presently, with more wisdom, and with a good deal of praiseworthy forbearance, Addington was ready to serve under Pitt, if only Grenville, Windham, and Canning, who had shown themselves the fiercest of his political foes, were left out of the new ministry. But to this also Pitt would not agree; and his refusal of the only compromise which a man of any self-respect could well stoop to offer, gave much offence to many others besides the King himself. It is fair, however, to remember, that with all the trouble they gave him, and with all their fierce or fussy attacks on a minister of his own approving, Pitt, for his own part, had some good reason to uphold the claims of a party containing his best speakers and some of his most powerful allies. Perhaps we should allow, with Lord

Stanhope, that neither he nor Addington could well yield the point on which they differed. Nor can any greed of power be fairly laid to the charge of a man whose present conduct delayed his return to power for a twelvemonth longer.

At length, on the 20th May, a few days after the declaration of war with France, Pitt once more showed himself in the scene of his many triumphs, the House of Commons. Three days after, in the debate on the King's message, the Achilles of the English Parliament delivered a speech which those who heard it agreed in ranking among the greatest efforts of so great a master. During this session he held a middle course between the ministers and the regular opposition, urging on the former when they seemed to flag, and freely assailing them when they seemed to be going wrong. So great, indeed, was their fear of him, that an Income Tax Bill, which they had one day carried by a large majority, was altered the very next in accordance with the amendments which Pitt had vainly demanded the day before. On all questions of national defence they found him eager to turn the warlike spirit of his countrymen to the widest account. While some were all for increasing the regular army alone, his good sense taught him to set high store by that cheapest defence of all free nations, a large muster of trained volunteers. It was then a stirring time for the people of these islands. Emmet's outbreak in Dublin had hardly been put down when England

began to arm herself in every town and village against the enemy, whose long lines of plunder-loving veterans flashed coming havoc from the cliffs of Boulogne. Almost before the end of that summer, in spite of hindrances offered by a wavering government, some 300,000 volunteers had answered the challenge flung from beyond the Channel. As Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Pitt himself had been foremost in meeting the expected danger, by raising a body of 3,000 men from his own district; and at any time that autumn he might have been seen in his volunteer uniform, riding about as brigadier, to inspect or review his three battalions. One of these, it seems, had drawn up rules marked by the frequent proviso, "except in the case of actual invasion." On reading the draft rules, Pitt came at length to a clause providing that the corps should never be sent out of the country. Pitt's ready pen at once added the words, "except in the case of actual invasion."

In August of this same year, Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, having lost her old friend the Dowager Lady Chatham, came at her uncle's request to keep house for him at Walmer Castle. At the age of twenty-seven, the future virago of the Lebanon indulged in no worse sallies than such as might readily be forgiven to a lady of good birth, of much personal beauty, of varied accomplishments, and of a lively biting wit. During the short remainder of Pitt's life, her loving service was freely rendered

him, and her presence gave to his dwelling the one charm it had never known before. For him and a few favoured friends she reserved the better part of her inward self, but her wit would play unmercifully on those for whom she had no special liking. One morning for instance, more than a year later, when Lord Mulgrave, then become Pitt's Foreign Secretary, was seated with her at breakfast, a broken egg-spoon was given him to eat his egg with. In answer to his question, "how can Pitt have such a spoon as this?" she asked him if he had not yet discovered "that Mr. Pitt sometimes uses very slight and weak instruments to effect his ends."

In the short Christmas Session little was done, beyond a partial attack made by Pitt on the ministerial mode of handling the volunteer movement; and this attack resulted in the virtual adoption of Pitt's own plan. Next year, however, Pitt's criticisms became more frequent, and more unfriendly. He would not join with Grenville in a regular assault on his whilom friends, but he could not stand by and see, in silence, things done, of which he heartily disapproved. Lord St. Vincent's blundering management of the navy provoked him into making a motion which, failing of its apparent aim, did nevertheless succeed in shaming the Admiralty into exertions better according with the need of the hour. At this time also, the King's illness made him pause before he bound himself to join Fox and Grenville in their efforts to turn out the present ministry. But the

King soon after got well, and Pitt saw no reason for delaying the fall of a government already tottering for months past. After a few pitched battles, each more ruinous than the one before, the Addington ministry agreed on the 29th April to give up the hopeless struggle. On the next day Pitt was commanded by his Majesty to draw up a written plan of a new government.

Pitt obeyed, but the wish he felt to insure the country a strong government, led him to include in his draft plan, the names of Fox and Lord Grenville, two men whom his Majesty specially abhorred. On the 5th May he received from the King a cold and querulous letter, in which his Majesty not only refused to accept the names of men so hateful to him, the one on personal, the other on political grounds, but even demanded from Pitt the plainest assurance of his belief in the wisdom of that very Test Act, which Pitt would have repealed three years before. The minister's answer was worthy of his upright self. He assured the king of his adherence, both to the opinions held by him in 1801, and to the promise he had then given his Majesty, not to stir the Catholic question during his reign. Avowing his readiness to yield the other points, if so his Majesty commanded, he still begged the favour of a personal interview. This was granted. The King, who had hardly spoken to his old servant for the last three years; who had even once passed him in Hyde Park without notice, now received him with compliments and

kind show. Pitt for three hours pleaded his friends' cause, and not quite in vain. With Fox, indeed, his master, for very good reasons, would have nothing whatever to do; but some of his followers might be admitted into the new Cabinet. Pitt was welcome also to take in Lord Grenville. But when he proceeded to act upon these concessions, he discovered that both the Grenville party and the followers of Fox refused to enter a Cabinet whence the great Whig leader himself would be shut out. It was in vain that the latter urged his own friends to take the opening denied to himself. Grey and Sheridan were not less resolute on the one side, than Grenville and Windham on the other. Deeply hurt at the wilfulness of his own kinsman, Pitt determined "to teach that proud man that he could do without him, although the effort might cost him his life." How much he meant by the last clause may be gathered from the conviction, expressed by Lord Castlereagh in a letter written just about this time to Lord Wellesley, that, *if Pitt's health did not fail him*, the present trouble would only rouse him to greater and more successful exertions than ever.

It seems hardly worth while to clear Pitt from the blame imputed to him by Lord Macaulay for so soon giving up the point regarding Fox. He had no great cause to love his former rival, whose sentiments and conduct were widely different from his own. The King had not quite recovered from a dangerous illness, and he hated Fox as heartily as a

high-minded, headstrong, overweening monarch could naturally hate the factious low-toned ally of his unworthy son. It was very doubtful whether Fox would anyhow have agreed to take office under Pitt; while it seems pretty certain that the pair could never have held together long. After all too, it was perhaps the alliance between Fox and Grenville which at first induced Pitt, anxious only for the help of his kinsman and former colleague, to plead for the admission also of that kinsman's new friend. Moreover, let us not forget that the new minister had for some time lain under the cloud of his Sovereign's displeasure; and that, however highly he might have valued the support of Fox, he had no reason to mistrust his own power of governing the country without that support.

With failing health, and a cabinet somewhat shorn of the wished-for strength, the great minister prepared to make good the words which he had uttered in his wrath against Grenville. In Parliament he had to meet the combined attacks of three different parties, led severally by Grenville, Fox, and Addington. Across the Channel, Napoleon, late First Consul, now a fullblown Emperor, was weaving his plans for gaining that brief command of the sea, which was all the opening he needed for a triumphant raid upon British soil. So sure was he of the desired issue, that medals were actually struck, as if London had already fallen into his hands. Later years have but the more clearly proved what Fox

and Grenville, in 1804, professed to gainsay, the timeliness of Pitt's exertions to ward off the threatened invasion. Nothing but a chain of tiresome mishaps, one while the slowness of his agents, at another the death of his trustiest commander, or again, the wind's perverseness in blowing from the wrong quarter, prevented Napoleon from trying to carry out his scheme of vengeance on the overweening islanders. While Grenville busied himself with his books and gardens, and Fox accused the ministry of raising groundless alarms, Pitt was calmly grasping at every means of statesmanlike defence against the onset of a foe whose true measure he had already taken; in whom, to quote from a fragment written by himself this very year, he saw "all the captious jealousy of conscious usurpation dreaded, detested, and obeyed; the giddiness and intoxication of splendid but unmerited success; the arrogance, the presumption, the self-will of unlimited and idolized power; and, more dreadful than all in the plenitude of authority, the restless and incessant activity of guilty but unsated ambition." After some fierce debates in the Lower House, where Castlereagh and Canning were now his only allies of mark, he carried his Bill for establishing a better system of Army Reserves. Martello towers were built along the southern coast of England. Fire-ships were fitted out in the vain hope of destroying the Boulogne flotilla. The Spaniards began openly to arm against us, and

forthwith our Admirals were ordered to seize the Spanish treasure-ships on their way from America. Russia, Sweden, and the German Powers, were once more invited to form a close alliance with Great Britain against Europe's common foe. Plans were sketched by Pitt himself for landing British and Russian troops in the South of Italy, and British, Russian, and Swedish troops in the North of Germany, while Austria and Russia were to deal with the French in Northern Italy, and Prussia was to play her part along the Rhine.

Amidst the greater cares of this period Pitt found time to aid Wilberforce in his effort to put down the Slave Trade. A bill for abolishing it in five years actually for the first time passed the Commons, but so late in the session that no hope remained of carrying it this year through the Lords. One step, however, towards the overthrow of a system whose abettors were still almost as powerful as the foes of parliamentary reform, was taken by Pitt on his own authority. An Order in Council, issued in November, decreed the extinction of the Slave Trade throughout the conquered colonies; and this fact alone, not to speak of his many former efforts in the same cause, makes our astonishment all the greater at Lord Brougham's unfounded remark of Pitt's time-serving on this very question. Among other matters which also this year engaged Pitt's attention, were the attempted settlement of the quarrel between his Majesty and the Prince of

Wales, and the choice of a new Archbishop of Canterbury, in the room of Dr. Moore. In the former case, just as the King was ready for the promised interview, the Prince excused himself from attending on the plea of illness; and a second attempt to bring them together later in the autumn fell through in nearly the same way. With regard, on the other hand, to Dr. Moore's successor, Pitt pleaded hard for his old tutor, Bishop Tomline; but the King had fixed his fancy on Dr. Manners Sutton, and when Archbishop Moore died in January, 1805, it was the Bishop of Norwich, not he of Lincoln, who was chosen to fill his place.

The year 1805, the last of the great minister's public life, opened with fresh fights in Parliament. Fiercely was Pitt assailed for his seizure of the Spanish frigates, for his scheme of recruiting the army reserves, for his silence regarding the Catholic claims, which Fox himself was to hold in abeyance the very next year. Sheridan, Fox, Grey, and Windham, kept firing their pointed shafts at every seeming hole in the strong man's armour. But their keenest onset came to nothing against the champion of a good cause, backed by a large following, a heart of rock, and a tongue which had lost none of its old sharpness. Sheridan himself was scathed with such a shower of scornfully playful sarcasm, that he could only answer with a long screech of personal abuse, redolent of the Madeira he had gulped down in the meanwhile. All these

triumphs, however, cost Pitt dear. The hard work told so heavily on his broken health, that the approach of Easter found him anxious to take some little holiday at Bath. But again, as during the year before, public business kept him at his post; and this time the business was to him of a kind exceedingly painful. It concerned the fair fame of Lord Melville, the oldest, steadiest, the most powerful of Pitt's supporters during the long term of his former ministry, and now the able head of that department which Lord St. Vincent had done so little to adorn. Before Easter came, Pitt knew that the Opposition were determined to bring forward a vote of censure against the chief of the Admiralty for misapplication of public monies while he held the post of Treasurer to the Navy. To them it mattered little whether his Lordship were really guilty, if so they might get rid of an able minister, or overthrow perhaps an obnoxious Government.

It was in vain that Pitt, believing firmly in his friend's innocence of more than a trifling oversight, tried every means he could to defeat his opponents, or at least to effect a compromise. It was bootless for Canning to declare that if Lord Melville had either told more or less than he did about the matter, no case could have been made out against him. Some of Pitt's own supporters took part, for various reasons, in the assault on a minister whose honesty of purpose no one pretended to doubt. On the 8th of April Whitbread opened

fire in a long speech. Pitt proposed a Select Committee instead of a vote of censure. But when Wilberforce spoke in favour of Whitbread's motion, and other independent members followed suit, the issue began to look serious. At length the votes were taken, and found exactly equal. After a pause of several minutes the Speaker, Abbot, with a white face, gave the casting vote against Lord Melville. Pitt jammed down his little cocked hat on his forehead while the tears were seen trickling down his cheeks; and fenced round by a circle of his younger followers, he walked like one bewildered out of the House. On the same day—for the debate lasted far into the morning—Lord Melville resigned his office; and finding himself still pursued by the rancour of his enemies, besought Pitt to let his name be struck off the Privy Council. To an offer so generous Pitt gave a very unwilling assent. When Whitbread again rose to demand further penalties against his Lordship, Pitt stopped him with the announcement of what he had already done in deference to the seeming wishes of the House of Commons, declaring at the same time, with a quivering lip and in tones that seemed to tremble through the hall, how deep and bitter a pang he felt in being thus made the means of yet sterner punishment to his noble friend. How much of that punishment was really deserved may be gathered from the issue of Lord Melville's impeachment the next year, when a large majority of his

peers found him guiltless of all the offences laid to his charge.

Not content with smaller game, Whitbread presently flew at the First Minister himself for having, in 1796, advanced some of the public money to two contractors, Messrs. Boyd and Benfield. This time, however, his prey escaped him. An amendment, justifying the partial breach of law, was carried without a division. Erelong another trial awaited Pitt. On the 13th May, Fox brought forward a motion in support of the Catholic claims. It was painful for a man of Pitt's high character to vote against a measure which, in his heart, he probably desired more earnestly than did his rival; but, with his usual straightforward cleaving to his word, he avowed the continuance both of his old feelings towards the Roman Catholics, and of the particular causes which bound him still to waive the advocacy of claims as lawful as he firmly believed them to be harmless. With a passing tribute to the "splendid eloquence" of Grattan's first speech in the Imperial Parliament, he warned his hearers against now attempting to stir a question which he saw no chance of getting speedily settled. Of course the motion fell through. About this time also, Lord Sidmouth began to talk of throwing up his post in the Cabinet. He had been half hostile to Lord Melville, while some of his followers openly voted against that nobleman. Persuaded for a time to stay on, he and his friend Lord Buckinghamshire

left the Ministry for good in July. Out of these losses one good thing arose—in Lord Castlereagh Pitt gained one of the very best war-ministers whom this country ever saw.

Amidst the turmoil of home politics Pitt never lost sight of foreign affairs. In April he persuaded the Emperor Alexander to conclude a secret treaty with Great Britain. By the end of August his rough plans of the year before had borne fruit in the shape of a coalition strong enough, one might have fancied, to crush Napoleon at one blow. Russia, Austria, Naples, and Sweden, were at length prepared to make common cause with England against the imperial shifter of his neighbours' landmarks. Nelson was flying all about the Atlantic in search of Villeneuve. Castlereagh was preparing to land in the north of Germany the first division of an English army larger than any yet despatched to the seat of war, and commanded no longer by the Duke of York. A scheme of his own planning was about to be tried against the Boulogne flotilla. Pitt spared no effort to win wavering Prussia over to our side. But Bonaparte was not to be taken in the toils. With one of his eagle swoops he had dashed away from Boulogne to cut off General Mack at Ulm, and the surrender of thirty thousand Austrian soldiers in the middle of October cast a foreboding gloom over many hearts. But a gleam of rare sunshine soon followed. On returning from his bootless chase Nelson had landed,

seen Pitt who accompanied him to his carriage, and presently embarked on board the *Victory*, in chief command of a large fleet bound for Cadiz to meet the enemy. A few days after the capitulation of Ulm, the great sailor fought his last and greatest battle off Cape Trafalgar. The news of that peerless triumph, dashed by the death of England's peerless Captain, having been brought to Pitt in the middle of the night, he, contrary to his wont on former occasions, could not compose himself to sleep again, but got up at three in the morning. Soon after the event had become noised abroad in England, Pitt dined at the Mansion House on Lord Mayor's day. On his health being drunk as the saviour of Europe, he disclaimed the special compliment in a speech of little more than these few words—"England has saved herself by her exertions, and the rest of Europe will be saved by her example." It was at this same banquet that Erskine, getting up to speak, was told by Pitt, with a warning shake of the finger, to remember they were drinking his health "as a distinguished Colonel of Volunteers." Erskine's fear of Pitt, who could always check him by a look or a gesture, saved the company from a rambling speech on all kinds of political topics.

The battle of Trafalgar seemed to give Pitt new health and spirits during the rest of that year. The Duke of Wellington, then Sir Arthur Wellesley, hero of Assaye, and brigadier-elect under Lord Cathcart, tells of his liveliness, his long rides, his quiet dinners

and not intemperate suppers, when the two were staying at Lord Camden's seat in Kent. Another friend who met him in Gloucestershire remembers his fondness for Lucan, the playful ease of his manner, and the instructive richness of his talk. No one, he adds, would have discovered a trace of the Prime Minister in the "accomplished idler," who touched so pleasantly on all kinds of topics, grave or gay. In December we find him doing the invalid at Bath, entertaining several of his friends by turns, and playing the critic, at their own request, to Canning and Lord Mulgrave, one of whom had written a spirited, the other a feeble poem, on the battle of Trafalgar.

But the great minister's days were already numbered. The gleam of sunshine born of Nelson's great victory too soon passed away before a cloud of unforeseen disaster. That victory had saved England from all chance of a French landing for years to come, but the tremendous defeat which Napoleon a few weeks after dealt on the Austrian and Russian armies at Austerlitz, sealed the doom of that great coalition which Pitt had toiled so hard to carry out. This cruel overthrow of plans framed with the utmost skill and the largest foresight, was more than Pitt's weakened body could bear. His mind remained unconquerable; but the gout, which had shown itself in his feet, was driven inwards, and after a month of gradual wasting the greatest minister and one of the noblest men whom England ever

produced, peacefully breathed his soul away on the morning of the 23rd January, 1806, in his hired house on Putney Heath. The last words he was ever heard to utter were words of tenderness for that country, whose grateful remembrances during his long term of power he had done so much to deserve.

On the marks of respect shown to his memory, on the splendour of his public funeral, on the costly monument built for him at the public expense, on the payment of his debts out of the public purse, and the pensions granted to his kinswomen, what need is there to dwell? All these and many other particulars of his life and death are fully and clearly told by his new biographer, whose work not many, we think, could read through without bringing away with them a clearer impression of the man therein described, and a deep conviction of his great pre-eminence as statesman, minister, patriot, over all the parliamentary leaders of his own day. If his lordship has done no more than this, if he has treated us to no pages of brilliant writing, no passionate outbursts of onesided praise, no reckless handling of topics beside the mark, let us be only the more thankful for a kind of abstinence in these days rare enough. He has, at any rate, produced four volumes full of matter at once agreeable and well-chosen—sometimes even quite new; volumes which only a gentleman could have written, in a style easy, simple, not devoid of a certain quiet

grace, relieved by not a few passages of polished eloquence, and by many a phrase which surprises the reader for its happy yet unobtrusive point. On the whole, his life of his great kinsman seems to be at once truthful in spirit, and comprehensive in its details. Nothing has been wilfully garbled, and many things have been set in their true light. Some of us may still be allowed to question the wisdom of all Pitt's measures for keeping down the Jacobins at home, or removing the pressure caused by a bad harvest and a lengthened war; others who think that literature and the arts need help from men in power, may agree with Lords Stanhope and Macaulay in blaming Pitt for not giving a pension to Cowper or a bishopric to some able churchman, though he seems to have pleaded hard for Paley, and had probably some hand in making an exciseman of Burns. Few of us would now break a lance in defence of the famous Sinking Fund, and some may perhaps rightly regret Pitt's exceeding deference to his Sovereign's will; though on the latter point Fox himself but followed his rival's example a year after that rival's death. But Pitt's excellence as a financier, his large views of fiscal and commercial policy, the skill and energy with which he carried on the war against an enemy who could never grant him the only kind of peace for which an English statesman should ever care, seem to our thinking no longer questions for fair dispute. Had he but lived a little longer, indeed, the chances are that the war

would have ended happily many years before the battle of Waterloo. Nor can any one now pretend to ascribe his retirement in 1801 to any other than the cause already named. But clearest of all is the moral height on which he stood above his fellows, by reference to which alone can his more doubtful actions be fairly judged. To call him greedy of power is simply to betray one's own blindness to his real worth. Great as an orator and a statesman, he was greatest of all as a high-minded patriot, an honest gentleman, a loving-hearted Christian. The man whose youth was so pure, whose temper so forgiving, whose friendships were so true, whom Wilberforce deemed the most upright man he knew, whose moral sway over the British Parliament was acknowledged with an envious sigh by the most selfish of men, Napoleon Bonaparte, did he not well deserve the trustful homage of that nation, whose strength he wielded for so many years? May England never cease to be proud of such a statesman —never learn to disparage the moral nobleness of such a man!

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

Of all the eminent men of these latter days whose lives have been thought worthy of embalming in printer's ink, Sheridan seems to have met with nearly the worst treatment at the hands of his biographers. Watkins went at him as a literary undertaker and political antagonist was likely enough to do, with a ready ear for unfavourable stories and a natural blindness to his greater qualities. With better means of appreciating his rare genius and with finer sympathies for a brother wit and poet, Moore seems to have lacked that deep personal knowledge of the man, that unfaltering candour, without which no genuine biography can be written. How thoroughly he failed in his personal portraiture may be gathered from George the Fourth's joke after reading his work: "Why, sir, I have before me the most conclusive evidence of his having barbarously attempted the life of Sheridan!" And now are we presented with a third memoir, which, while partially successful in supplying former defects, must, on the whole, be deemed a yet more signal failure than the other two. It offers itself to our

notice as a true picture of the departed statesman, dramatist, and good-fellow, drawn by an "octogenarian, who stood by his knee in youth, and sat at his table in manhood." To render the likeness as complete as possible, the author has further sought to surround his hero with the needful accessories, or, in his own words, "to associate him with the elements in which he moved and breathed, and by which he was so powerfully governed." How far he has fulfilled his promises, the curious reader may judge for himself, if the interest of the subject should ever carry him beyond the first chapter. We have read the book through, and cannot honestly advise another to go and do likewise. The reader, curious or incurious, will do well to take our word for the merits of two of the worst-written volumes that ever issued from the press.

In very truth, these volumes are wretchedly composed, and the original errors have been faithfully preserved, if not grossly multiplied, in the printing. To give examples would only be a waste of time, nearly every page affording its quota of bad grammar, incoherent sentences, guiltless sometimes of the verb, sometimes of the predicate, or the thing predicated. More than once we are treated to such formations as *facetiæ*, *minutiæ;* the stops are flung about the page according to any rules but those of usefulness or fitness; and the general style, where any such thing is visible, suggests that of Doctor Johnson become very much the worse for

keeping. The traces of old age are wofully abundant, and the ill-health pleaded by the author himself may account for many startling inaccuracies in the printed work. But no amount of correction short of wholesale renewal by an abler hand could ever have made it much more readable than it is now; and lightly as we would wish to deal with the shortcomings of one who has really done his little best to show us the fair side of his idol's character, still we cannot but express our utter amazement at the wide contrast between so promising an outset and so paltry a conclusion. The new facts and notions which the book really contains are lost in a sea of wordy, confused, half-meaning twaddle, through which the truth-seeking reader has to wade with infinite trouble and the very smallest amount of final profit. Even the best stories in it are spoiled in the telling; the true relation of particular events and persons is left to unfold itself the best way it can; and the whole narrative, in its feeble flounderings and hazy bewilderments, teems with tokens of a mind unable either to think clearly or to express its meaning in straightforward language. Old age and sickness are entitled to all respect and consideration; but a work put forth with so much pretension as this must after all be judged on its own merits, and a writer who himself in his preface turns all such pleas out of court, cannot quarrel with those who censure him for faults discoverable by any unbiassed reader.

A really good life of Sheridan by one who had known him personally, during at least his more brilliant days, would undoubtedly have amused and interested large numbers of the reading public. But such a work could only have been written by some one who, besides other needful qualifications, had some share of that peculiar wit, which clothed the simplest sayings and doings of the boon friend of Fox and the Prince of Wales with a charm more easily felt than described. Byron in his own day, or Mr. Thackeray in ours, might have done passable justice to one whom the former loudly admired, and whose character resembled in some of its chief faults and beauties the character so lovingly drawn by the latter of that easy, reckless, witty, good-natured scapegrace, Henry Fielding. How fair a likeness may be drawn of a departed wit was shown the world a few years ago in the *Memoirs of Sydney Smith* by his daughter, Lady Holland. From that work we, who never saw the witty and wise old canon of St. Paul's, can glean not only some rare samples of his flowing humour, but also ample tokens of the extent to which his fair biographer inherited her father's mental riches. Evidently she had the wit to seize and the talent to reproduce nearly every turn and glance of that playful fancy, which sparkled over the deep stores of his clear head and kind heart, like sunny wavelets that gem the surface of a calm blue sea. Just such a work as hers would we have liked to see done in memory

of poor Sheridan. But that is, and perhaps ever will be, among the things that are not. Something nearer the mark might, indeed, have been produced if the ghost of Tom Moore returning to this earth could have dressed up, in his own graceful words, the tale which Sheridan's latest biographer had to unfold. But, luckily or unluckily for all concerned, Englishmen have not yet generally attained that stage of comfortable belief, which leads beyond the Atlantic to the publication of strange new plays by Shakspeare, and startling effusions of various kinds by other personages who have long since vanished from the material world.

Still, whatever faults we have had to find with the dish so set before us by an "Octogenarian," it would be unjust to ignore the few plums which his pudding contains. They are neither large nor numerous, but they are really there, and we may be thankful for them, such as they are. To a certain point he does really help us to know more of Sheridan's inner self than we did before. Some false or half-false impressions are removed or corrected; some doubtful circumstances are brought out into a clearer light. One or two old stories receive a new point, and perhaps a truer application; and various incidents hitherto untold serve to illustrate the less known, and often the most pleasing traits in Sheridan's character. We really do see something of the hero in undress, and the knowledge thus gained of him is all in his favour. And

because it is so, we have thought of working these new materials into a revised abridgement of the story once told by Thomas Moore.

Richard Brinsley was born in Dublin in 1751, Irish by descent as well as birth. His grandfather, Dr. Thomas Sheridan, after having for some years distinguished himself as a first-rate schoolmaster in Dublin, obtained a living in the south of Ireland through the interest of his friend Swift. As a preacher, his powers were not less remarkable than had been the extent and thoroughness of his classical learning; but an unlucky turn for joking out of season spoiled his chances of that preferment which a chaplain of the Lord Lieutenant had good reason to expect. A sermon preached on His Majesty's birthday, from a text which seemed very like a satire, lost him at once his chaplaincy, and all further intercourse with the Castle. Too light-hearted and easy-going to care much for this mishap, he returned to his parish duties, and the friendly greetings of Dean Swift and Lord Cork, with whom he seems to have joked, scribbled, and fiddled away the greater part of his idle hours. Always "slovenly, indigent, and cheerful," independent, and full of pleasant humours, he died in 1738, leaving his son Thomas an empty purse, the gift of a good classical education, and the inheritance of all his own eccentric qualities. In the last-named particular Thomas even surpassed his father, as much as the father's talents in point of brilliancy surpassed

his own. His life-mania was elocution, for the better teaching of which he first started as an actor on the boards of a Dublin theatre, and won, as the "Octogenarian" tells us, "a reputation subordinate only to that of David Garrick himself." After a time he left the stage and travelled hither and thither, giving lectures on his favourite study as he went along, and laying up materials for his *Pronouncing Dictionary*, the fame of which has not yet died away. The pension granted him by Lord Bute, and the money earned by his writings, enabled him at length to abandon a resource which already threatened to abandon him; and, during the last days of young Richard's boyhood, he seems to have settled quietly down for some years at Bath, confining the results of his elocutionary experiences henceforth to the bosom of his own family, and a small circle of favoured pupils. About this time died young Richard's mother, a lady of much talent, and an authoress favourably known to the readers of her own day.

Richard Brinsley's schooling began in his seventh year, under the hands of Mr. Samuel Whyte, of Dublin. His progress here was outwardly slow enough to verify his mother's disbelief in her boy's capacity. "Two such impenetrable dunces I never met with" was her remark to the schoolmaster, as she warned him of the task his patience would encounter in teaching Richard and his elder brother Charles. Idle and careless they certainly were, but

the abilities at least of her younger boy sufficiently asserted themselves in due time. Even in these early days he showed enough of irregular talent to have tickled the pride of a more discerning mamma. If he failed to master the regular school-lessons, the little rhymed epigrams which he scrawled over his copybook, to the infinite wrath of the teacher at whom they were levelled, gave ample promise of the good things that were afterwards to flow from his mouth and pen. Far fairer than Mr. Whyte's was the estimate formed of young Sheridan at Harrow, whither he was removed in his eleventh year. Although he did nothing there also in the way of ordinary development, his natural cleverness found due acknowledgement both from masters and boys. It was no trickery or illusion, as Moore wrongly implied, which made Dr. Sumner and his under-master, Dr. Parr, agree in thinking so highly of their pupil's powers. Through all his idleness and unsteady ways, they evidently saw, as men in their position were likely enough to see, the wild eccentric workings of a gifted and original mind, whose powers are better felt than understood by the ordinary gazer. Evidently he was what Parr described him, one of those of whom much might be expected in after days, however little they shone in the every-day round of schoolboy studies. What latent force he had both his masters were sharp enough to discover, and ready enough to admire; but, as Parr confesses, neither of them could ever

bring that force into play during the few years that Sheridan stayed at Harrow. About the time that something more might have been made of him, he was taken away from school by his eccentric father, who thought to mould his sons after the new pattern demanded by those wonderful discoveries which he fancied himself to have made in the art of elocution. But whatever success he had with Charles, Richard, who was never a favourite of his, could not be induced to kindle his genius on that shrine, but went on as before gaining bits of knowledge in his own desultory way, and scribbling light pieces of prose or verse whenever the whim seized him. Ere-long his essays in the latter line began to concentrate themselves on a certain fair maid of Bath, who, after some strange crosses and romantic adventures, lived to reign for many years the wife of his heart, and the fairest ornament of his palmiest days.

Miss Linley, the lovely, the graceful, and accomplished daughter of a music-master at Bath, added to her other charms a voice whose sweetness had already been renowned in public concert-rooms. Among the many admirers who naturally flocked about her were Charles and Richard Sheridan. Little by little the friendly liking she had always felt for the latter warmed into a passion more akin to his own feeling for her. Quietly, but surely, the actor's son made himself master of a heart which suitors far more favoured by outward influences wooed in vain. Having narrowly escaped the snare of a loveless

marriage with a rich gentleman of forty, who had the nobleness to release his bride from a troth too hastily plighted, the "Maid of Bath" nearly fell into a trap of another kind laid by a frail Benedick, named Mathews, who covered his vile approaches under the mask of friendship for the daughter of his nearest friend. Sheridan's warnings against this plausible wooer, backed by his own behaviour towards herself, opened her eyes at last to a danger from which no better safeguard seemed to offer itself than a swift and secret flight with young Sheridan to the Continent in the beginning of 1772. After a private marriage, of whose legality some doubts were to be raised, the poor girl was received into a convent at Lille, whence her lover wrote home to her family to explain the reason of her flight. During his stay there he found that Mathews, in the excess of rage at being thus baulked of his prey, had published all sorts of slanders in the Bath papers against both himself and Miss Linley. The slanderer having fled to London, young Sheridan followed him thither, brought him to a stand, and forced him in fair fight to eat his lies at the point of his conqueror's sword. A full recantation, signed by Mathews himself, appeared in a later number of the journal which had contained the original slanders. But the quarrel was not to end here. Wild with fury at this further exposure, and the growing coldness of former friends, Mathews challenged his rival to another duel, which was fought this time near Bath

with pistols and swords. A more savage encounter, without actual death, could hardly have taken place in the worst days of feudal lawlessness. Pistols were fired in vain, swords were used and broken to no purpose. At last the combatants closed for a death-struggle, in which Mathews bore his opponent to the ground, and, after wounding him repeatedly with his broken sword, bade him beg for his life. "Never," murmured Sheridan, as he fainted away. At this point the seconds rushed in, and Sheridan was carried back to Bath severely wounded. For many weeks he lay helpless on a sick bed, forbidden to see even the poor girl for whom he had suffered so much, and who having lately returned with her parents to Bath, claimed a wife's special right to nurse her husband through an illness which at one time threatened to be his last.

"Love conquers everything," said the old Roman poet; and from the days of Pyramus and Thisbe to our own, few pairs of determined lovers have ever failed to come together, in spite of all the bars and bolts, and fiery dragons, that watchful parents and furious kinsmen can set between them. To this rule Miss Linley and her lover were no exception. Her father, with all his stern watchfulness, was no match for so resolute and faithful a pair. We read without surprise how letters were exchanged between them and meetings arranged, and laugh exultingly at the arts by which Sheridan repaired the chain of intercourse as often as any of its links got broken.

No wit could baffle a lover who succeeded in getting speech of his mistress under the guise of a hackney-coachman, and no dangers could frighten a mistress who had a lover so young, witty, fearless, and full of resources to retain her captive heart. At length their united firmness softened the rock of Mr. Linley's aversion, and Sheridan's enrolment as a member of the Middle Temple removed the last stumbling-block that lay in their path. From this time the Linley family began to regard him as Elizabeth's betrothed, and in April, 1773, the faithful pair were wedded anew, at the early ages respectively of twenty-one and eighteen. Whatever her maiden follies might have been, a better or fonder wife than Elizabeth Linley could hardly have graced the hearth of any husband; and whatever his shortcomings may have been towards others, few husbands have loved their wives with a truer, a tenderer love than Richard Sheridan always felt for the helpmate and sweetener of his strange career.

The first and some of the happiest days of their wedded life were passed in a cottage at East Burnham. Barring the money which her rejected suitor, Mr. Long, had so handsomely settled on Mrs. Sheridan, their stock in hand comprised little more than good health, buoyant spirits, and loving hearts. The wife's sweet voice, indeed, might soon have sung them into a fortune with comparative ease, but the pride of a husband and a gentleman cut off for evermore a fountain from which mere selfish idleness

would have been but too ready to draw. From the day of her marriage, Mrs. Sheridan was never allowed to sing in public save once, when a musical festival at Worcester, for which her services had been engaged by her father before the marriage, seemed likely, without her aid, to break down as a great charitable undertaking. Then, indeed, she sang, and sang most triumphantly, but all her earnings went into the plate which her voice had helped so materially to fill. Even to a request for her appearance in a concert to be given before the Royal Family, her resolute husband turned a deaf ear, gaining thereby the hearty approval of stout old Dr. Johnson, who, for his own part, "would have prepared *himself* for a public singer as readily as let his wife be one."

But somehow the couple had to live, and Sheridan's law studies never got beyond their opening stage. His pen, however, aided sometimes by hers, supplied them with the daily leg or shoulder of mutton: "a *joint* concern of which we jointly partook," being the joke which he and a friend made up between them out of the subject of their then talk. What he wrote at that time he never thought of disinterring afterwards from the periodicals wherein they lie mouldering to this day, although, from the writings of which he is the avowed author, we may guess those others to have deserved a better fate. That he had the pen of a ready and sparkling writer can hardly be doubted of one who could

afterwards produce *The School for Scandal*, and whose daily talk would have furnished *Punch* with matter for a weekly number.

In the spring of 1774, Sheridan, with help from his father-in-law, rented and furnished a house in Orchard Street, Portman Square. Here Mrs. Sheridan soon became the centre of a small but brilliant group of guests, drawn to her pleasant evening parties by the charm of her husband's wit and her own accomplishments, among which the giving of good dinners ranked not least. Ladies of undoubted fashion began to grace her drawing-rooms, and men of birth and title acknowledged Sheridan as their equal and friend. The airs of a patron he never would brook, and all attempts to treat him or his wife as inferiors recoiled on those who made them. Among the earliest of his titled friends was the Earl of Surrey, who would drop in for the sake of his company at all hours, and ask him in return to spend an occasional week at Worksop. To one of these invitations Sheridan playfully replied by way of refusal, that "his friend Challie had determined to *keep him in port* for the rest of the season:" Challie being a wine-merchant, who deemed the privilege of dining at Sheridan's table a fair exchange for the wine which his host was never pressed to pay for.

To keep up this gay style of living Sheridan worked all the harder with his pen; rising often at unearthly hours, or going to bed when others were

getting up. With his bottle of port beside him he wrote away through long winter nights, gaining money, but perhaps laying the foundation of that evil propensity to which men who work their brains at midnight seem peculiarly prone. About this time his first avowed comedy, *The Rivals*, had gained, after its second representation, a decided success, and brought in a handsome profit to its author. This brilliant and effective play was soon followed by the lively little farce of *St. Patrick's Day;* and in the next season the playgoers of Covent Garden Theatre crowded to see and applaud another triumph of Sheridan's versatility in the amusing opera of *The Duenna.* This piece, performed to full houses for seventy-five successive play-nights, secured for its author an early and unopposed admission to the Literary Club, under the wing of its Chairman, Dr. Johnson, through whose kindness Sheridan found himself placed on an equal footing with such stars in their different ways as Burke, Garrick, Reynolds, Gibbon, and the far-famed President himself. In two years the needy husband of a favourite public singer had thoroughly belied the dark forebodings of unbelieving friends, and opened out for both a prospect not less brilliant, and far more enviable, than any his wife had been content to forego. Their self-denial had already borne fruit a hundredfold, in friends, fame, and worldly riches. The planet that erewhile refused to shine with borrowed light had risen into a star of

nearly the first magnitude, by whose light many a star of once greater pretensions was destined henceforth to escape from utter obscurity.

On the 10th June, 1776, Garrick played his farewell part to the sorrowing audience of Drury Lane, and, amid a shower of tears and shoutings, took his formal leave of that world in which he had amassed undying fame and a very considerable fortune. His mantle as an actor had to wait some years for the shoulders of a fit successor; but his share in the management of Drury Lane fell to his friend Sheridan, by a joint investment arranged between him, Linley, and a third partner, named Ford. After some misunderstandings with Garrick's old partner, Lacy, who still owned his half of the entire concern, the new management got into working trim, and sought in various ways to attract a public grieving for the loss of its old favourite. The attempt, however, threatened to end in signal failure, until Sheridan bestirred himself, the next season, to bring out his matchless comedy, *The School for Scandal*. "Thank God it is finished!" were the words he wrote under the last lines of the last act, which was sent in to the prompter only five days before its first performance. "Amen!" wrote the prompter in his turn, as he got it ready for the green-room.

The success of this play surpassed even the enthusiastic prophecies of Garrick himself, and restored for many days the falling fortunes of his old theatre. Besides the immediate gains, it seems to have netted

in the two following years upwards of forty thousand pounds to the treasury. With his share of the profits, and the help of a loan from Garrick, which was duly repaid, Sheridan found himself able to buy up Lacy's share in the general partnership, and thus become owner of nearly two-thirds of a flourishing business. With common prudence his fortunes were already made But Sheridan was one of those uncommonly reckless beings who never have a sixpence at their command, while thousands perhaps are continually passing through their hands. His yearly income would have amply sufficed many a man of more extravagant tastes, but less indifferent as to the cost of gratifying them. But Sheridan had no more notion than any baby of the real value of what he squandered away. Like hungry Tantalus within sight of plenty, he seemed never to be free from debt and duns, whatever profits his theatre brought him in. In the days of universal gambling he was no gambler, nor did he lose money in rash speculations, or in practices approved by fast men in all ages. But somehow, whenever he had a large sum to receive, it was sure to be forestalled twice over. Even to the last his debts were absurdly small compared with his regular receipts, but he never would take the least trouble to burst the chain of his own weaving. He never kept an account by any chance, or examined his bills when they were sent in. His letters and other documents were thrown unread into a certain bag, from whence he

would take courage to draw them out again for perusal, more than a week after they had begun to accumulate. If he had money in hand, the first creditor who dunned him got paid, and the balance, if any there were, filled the pockets of the first person who met him in the streets with a tale of real or seeming distress. Whenever his needs were unusually pressing, he would keep writing orders for more money to Drury Lane, until his treasurer was obliged, on account of the theatre, to beg for a little longer breathing-time before the next demand. Even then Sheridan's affairs were not much improved. The letters containing fresh supplies were swept away unopened into the fatal bag along with those that contained only remonstrances, and seldom emerged from that limbo of confusion worse confounded, until some creditor, bolder or less patient than the rest, had fairly driven Sheridan into a corner by demanding an instant search among its contents.

This state of chronic embarrassment, coupled with his natural tendency to make light of his seeming troubles and laugh over what would have made others frown, led to grave doubts of Sheridan's honesty, and a general disbelief in the real extent of his monied resources. A special mystery hung over his transactions with regard to the purchase of so large a share in Drury Lane Theatre—a mystery which none of his former biographers had the power, or perhaps the wish, to clear up. We are

thankful to the "Octogenarian" for what new light he has thrown on this matter. He has shown beyond a doubt that the large advances made by Garrick to enable his friend to effect a purchase desired by both, were repaid in good time to the last farthing; and his own acquaintance with the subject of his memoir entitles him to be heard with deference on other occasions, in which public rumour weighed heavily on his friend. The fact that Sheridan's credit stood high among men of business for many years confirms, if true, the inference deducible from those other facts which admit of no further dispute. Still there was a mystery at the time, which Sheridan took delight in making worse mystified. We can fancy the cool assurance wherewith he played on the eager curiosity of an acquaintance who tried to pump out of him the true nature of his dealings with Garrick. The art with which he raised his hearer's expectations to a pitch of wonderment hardly bearable, the earnestness wherewith he made him swear to the strictest secrecy, and the shout of fun wherewith he roared out at last, "THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE!" would altogether have formed a fitting pendant to some of the best scenes in *The School for Scandal.*

But public rumour regarding Sheridan had more heads than one. Even his literary fame was not free from ill-natured aspersion. A story was got up by his enemies, and repeated by his first biographer, Watkins, that his last written comedy, *The*

School for Scandal, had been written, after all, by other hands than his. "Tulit alter honores;" but the person to whom those honours rightfully belonged was a young lady of name unknown, who died soon after the first appearance of her stolen work. It was a sad piece of literary theft; but, somehow, none of the young lady's friends or kindred ever stepped forth to wrest from the robber his ill-won gains. Sheridan, as usual, took no pains to refute the slander in set form, but contented himself with a playful discharge of jokes on the subject among his more familiar friends. In these days we need not handle such a question again; there are always some madmen in every age ready to maintain that Shakspere never wrote his own plays, or that some stupid forgery of a foreign imitator is the genuine handiwork of Walter Scott. Another charge against Sheridan, if less atrocious, seems no less untrue. According to some critics, he plagiarized without mercy, and wrote with infinite pains. According to plain matter-of-fact, what little he did borrow, as in the case of Mrs. Slipslop, lost nothing by the mode of transfer; while most of the evidence goes to prove that Sheridan commonly wrote as he talked, without effort, if not without forethought.

Having reached, at twenty-six, the crowning point of his fame as a dramatic writer, Sheridan determined to try his luck in the world of practical politics. From his boyhood political topics had

shared his attention with literary ones, and he had already written or projected essays on several leading questions of the day, among others, on the impending contest between England and her American colonies. His invitations to Devonshire House had already ripened into close friendship with the great Whig leaders who resorted thither, with Fox, Burke, Wyndham, Townsend, and their common patron, the Prince of Wales. Spurred, no doubt, by their example, and already tired of his managerial duties, he looked out for a vacant borough, and soon found the likeliest opening for a Whig novice among the electors of Stafford. How he went through the bore of a personal canvas, tickling the women's ears with graceful flatteries, and eating his way into the burghers' hearts at public dinners of mutton, pork, peas, and Staffordshire ale—how artfully he "took a rise" out of his future friend, Dick Wilson, in return for Wilson's abuse of him, while the two were riding together, as yet unknown to each other, in a stage-coach—how he won the approval, and had to shake the hands all round of a committee of working men, who called to examine him on his political principles—how, in the end, he and his friend Monckton were both triumphantly returned for the Parliament which sat after the Gordon riots of 1780—are incidents on which the last of his biographers not unamusingly dwells. In the autumn of the year just named he took his seat among the members of that Opposition which, under the

splendid leading of Fox, was soon to overthrow the falling Government of Lord North. His first speech, made soon afterwards in his own defence against a petition put in by the defeated candidates, though it was heard throughout "with particular attention," gave no special promise of future triumphs. According to Moore—from whom, however, the "Octogenarian" begs leave to differ, we know not why—Sheridan went that evening into the gallery, and asked Woodfall what he thought of his speech. "The answer of Woodfall, as he had the courage afterwards to own, was, 'I am sorry to say I do not think this is your line—you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits.' On hearing which, Sheridan rested his head upon his hand for a few minutes, and then vehemently exclaimed, 'It is in me, however, and, by God, it shall come out!'" How it did come out we all know; but Woodfall's criticism was, perhaps, not wholly refuted by the results of even a much later day. Sheridan's speeches, however flowing, brilliant, and persuasive, were never, we think, quite free from a certain alloy of fustian and over-ornament.

During his search for a constituency, Sheridan still took some interest in his theatre, besides contributing to a new political paper called *The Englishman*. To his crotchety, stiff-necked parent, with whom he had lately been reconciled, after years of estrangement, he had already resigned the

chief management of Drury Lane; but Garrick's death and his father's blundering enlisted his pen once more in the old cause. In honour of the former he composed, for delivery on the scene of Garrick's long triumph, a Monody which, however touching, could hardly be called what Byron is said to have called it, "an unequalled composition." *Unequal* it may be; but the noble poet's own monody on Sheridan far surpasses it in poetic power. Far worthier of Byron's warm praise of it as "the best farce ever produced," and "only too good for a farce," was *The Critic*, which came out in 1779, just in time to dispel the clouds that lowered over his financial prospects. His two theatres, for he had also bought shares in the Italian Opera House, were fast going down in the market, when, at the urgent entreaties of his friends and partners, Sheridan advertised his new play for an early performance. The expected evening drew very near, but the piece had not yet been written out, much less rehearsed. The managers waxed impatient, but got little by their importunities. Sheridan was in one of his idlest moods. At last, by a clever trick, the rest of the play was coaxed out of him at the eleventh hour. After dining with Linley, he was decoyed into the manager's room, and there locked up in company with writing-materials, a good fire, a tray of sandwiches, and two bottles of his favourite claret; his persecutors whispering through the keyhole their intent to keep him pri-

soner, till he had finished both the wine and the farce. Under this pleasant compulsion he scribbled away far into the small hours, finished the farce, and wound up the night with a fresh carousal among the colleagues whose cleverness had thus saved the theatre and won new laurels for himself. We give the story on the word of his "Octogenarian" friend, who seems to have heard it, if not from his own lips, at least from those of King, his stage-manager, to whom Sheridan's sayings during the supper following his release afforded as much of keen enjoyment as any farce.

The success of *The Critic, or, a Tragedy rehearsed*, repaid the trouble taken by Sheridan's friends to get it finished. The author's fame, and its own merits, ensured it a brilliant run on the boards of Old Drury, whose actors surpassed themselves on this occasion. As an exquisite piece of dramatic satire on follies common to poetasters and critics of every age, it has lost in reading none of the relish which once made it fall so profitably on the stage. This was Sheridan's last perfect essay in the line of original drama; although he left among his posthumous papers the *disjecta membra* of several later pieces, which no spurrings of his own ambition, no efforts of kind friends to counteract his inveterate laziness, could ever persuade him to complete.

Sheridan's childlike carelessness in money matters brought out the more strikingly his wonderful genius for disentangling the knots of his own making.

There was something in his personal demeanour which opened the cash-box of the most unyielding banker, and won more than sympathy from the most iron-hearted man of law. When Messrs. Kinnaird had turned a deaf ear to the most urgent prayers of Sheridan's messengers, he himself drove to their bank-door, and charmed them out of the large sum required to pay up a week's salaries to the Italian singers at the Haymarket. When a wine-merchant threatened him with an action for debt, he called on his creditor's attorney, and talked him out of a promise to stay further proceedings. More than once he managed to obtain a loan from the very man who had come to dun him for payment of a long account. At another time he asked his friend Kinnaird for the loan of a ten-pound note. His friend found that he had nothing under a fifty.

"'A what?' exclaimed Sheridan; 'a fifty? Nay, Douglas, you are deceiving me; there is no such a sum in the world—they have departed; it would refresh my memory to look on one.' Kinnaird placed the note in his hand. 'I am satisfied,' he cried, gazing upon it most affectionately, 'perfectly satisfied.' He was about to return it; Kinnaird desired him to fold it up for further use."

Pertinently to the subject of his debts, we may throw in a story which has been told less fitly of other eminent men. A tradesman, named Wilson, had repeatedly called on Sheridan for payment of a bill long due. On his next visit he found the defaulter with a good round sum on the table before

him. Seeing him look wishfully that way, Sheridan, in the politest terms, regretted that the money was already bespoken to pay a debt of honour. "Mine is a debt of honour, then, Mr. Sheridan," replied his creditor, as he tore his own bill into pieces; and a promise of immediate payment was the result.

Sheridan's political career was long, noteworthy and pretty free from blemish on the whole. On all great occasions, he gave his party a cheerful and effective support; but whenever duty seemed to demand it, he never shrank from voting with the other side. His speeches on the hustings may have been tainted with the insincerity common to so many professing Liberals, both of that day and the present. He was ready to "go in" for universal suffrage and annual parliaments, because he saw, like Fox, that England was safe enough from that lovely consummation for many years to come. Though himself a warm advocate for all practicable, and some impracticable, reforms, he would jokingly recommend a mocking use of the same cry to others. "Reform," he used to say, "is a capital bait to fish for gudgeons: it is the only true standard to catch an open constituency: it burns with patriotism — or at least with a show of patriotism, and that will do as well." The catch-word of those days still retains its virtue, and political leaders still seem as prone as ever to play into the hands of any demagogue bold enough to start a cry, which shall tickle the fancies of the unthinking

and shortsighted crowd. But in Parliament Sheridan spoke—at first seldom—with cautious brevity, but always in good taste, to the purpose, from the heart. In spite of every allurement, he remained true to his leading principles and the party that best embodied them, through long years of helpless struggle against the commanding genius of Pitt, and the serried phalanx that crowded the Tory benches of St. Stephen's. Taking office with Fox under Lord Rockingham, he went out with Fox on the appointment of Lord Shelburne to fill the room of the deceased Premier. Again sharing the fortunes of his Æneas, he served as Under-Secretary to the Treasury in the short-lived Coalition of 1783, after having vainly tried to stop the weaving of that unlucky rope of sand. From that year he never tasted the sweets of office until the death of Lord North's successor, the worthy son of the great Lord Chatham. While other Whigs of more pliable principles continued to enjoy the good things which Sheridan had helped to procure them, he held aloof from all compromises with a virtue for which he has never received the due credit. In spite of his chronic want of cash, and the tempting offers to which a man of his careless habits might well have been excused for hearkening, his innate dignity saved him from any falls of this kind. He resigned, at a later period, the further friendship of the Prince-Regent, with as manly a courage as he had declined the offer of twenty thousand pounds from the secret

agents of the American colonies, for his speeches in their behalf during the War of Independence.

Nearly from the first days of his married life Sheridan could boast of having no more intimate friend than the young Prince of Wales; and the intimacy lasted for many years, until the gay, accomplished, and Whig-loving heir-apparent had become transformed into the gay, licentious, and kingly Regent, intent on ridding himself at the same time both of his wife and his Whig connections. Common tastes and mutual liking—for in those days the Prince had plenty of personal as well as mental charms—drew them together as friends and equals, in spite of the difference in outward rank. They became as boon companions as Falstaff and Prince Hal; but the comparison must go no further, for Sheridan was as gentlemanly in his way as the Prince, and the subsequent breach between them was disgraceful only to the latter. These two, with the Earl of Surrey, Charles Fox, and a few more, made up a club of choice spirits, who assembled on stated evenings at the *Salutation Tavern*, in Tavistock Court. An honorary member of this club was the infamous Duke of Orleans, who encouraged the Prince in his worst propensities, and led him into the most ruinous excesses, with the view of laying him under obligations utterly degrading to the independence of a future King of England. With that hog from the Bourbon sty Sheridan at least claimed only the slightest acquaintance, and

always regretted his influence for evil over the weak young Prince. In the retired precincts of this favourite haunt all ceremony was laid aside, the Prince vanished in the boon companion, and merriment, wit, and wine were allowed to flow for hours without stint. From this spot the Prince and one or two trusty followers would sally forth under strange disguises and false names to see life in London streets, dive into foul dens of vice and wretchedness, and take the chance of knocking down an impetuous "Charley," or finding themselves entrapped in a nest of ruffians to whom murder came as naturally as picking a purse. In one of these rambles shared with Sheridan and the Earl of Surrey, a poor forlorn girl, abandoned by her faithless seducer, and spurned from his door by an unforgiving parent, found herself rescued by a timely charge among her brutal assailants from the life of friendless infamy into which, for her babe's sake alone, she had well-nigh determined to make the last fatal plunge. Touched by the beauty of her sad face, the gentle manners, the tones of seeming innocence, which made so marked a contrast with the place and people among whom he found her, the royal pleasure-seeker answered her tale of woe with promises of help and protection, while poor Sheridan, half wondering at the extent of his own wealth, emptied his purse of the last sovereign left there in her behalf. With the help of her new-found patrons, the rescued girl lived

to become ere long the happy wife of a worthy husband, and to see the child of her shame fall as a lieutenant in his country's service at Trafalgar. If the story of which we have here given the cream be true, there were seeds of good in the future libertine and scorner of early friends, which only the blight of very untoward circumstances prevented from duly ripening.

Another adventure which befel the three friends was marked by more of dangerous excitement at the beginning, and of funny extravagance towards the close. Ripe for a mischievous frolic, and further views of ruffian-life in the back-slums, they entered a famous "boosing-ken" in St. Giles's, crowded with all the villainry of a very bad neighbourhood. The incautious display of gold pieces was more than fellows half mad already with drink could stand. A regular row ensued, blows were given on all sides, and heads were cracked in plenty by the bludgeons which, luckily for themselves, the strangers wielded with some skill. But they were getting tired of withstanding the repeated assaults of so many, when the timely appearance of well-armed constables, whom one of the three had slipped out to summon, caused the sudden and most mysterious evanishment of their assailants. The beleaguered three, thus left alone, were pounced on by the wise old "Charleys" as disturbers of the peace and notorious criminals whom they had long been trying to catch. After a vain attempt at resistance,

they were hurried off before the nearest parish constable, to give the best answers they could to various charges of assault and battery, and other serious crimes. The scene that followed evidently exceeded the "Octogenarian's" powers of description, although it forms the most readable chapter in his book. We must imagine for ourselves the amount of "chaff" which two at least of the supposed culprits poured on the head of that modern Dogberry. His grave questions were parried by humorous and ironical replies, in which he could only read the corroboration of their guilt, enhanced by a wicked desire to make fun of his sacred self. At last, on pretence of turning king's evidence against his comrades, Sheridan persuaded the constable to send for Justice Graham, before whom the deposition might be made in due form. After the arrival of this gentleman, an old acquaintance of the accused, poor Dogberry found the tables gradually turning against him. Entering into the spirit of the joke, without wishing to betray the real names and rank of his friends, Graham drove the unlucky official nearly wild by working on his fears of a heavy fine for the false imprisonment of three perfectly innocent gentlemen, one of whom had been often seen in company with the Duke of York, while another was known to be a real prince: "a Persian prince," added Sheridan, "upon his travels, seeking information, and picking up pretty girls to grace his father's court." Utterly

amazed by all he heard, not knowing whom or what to believe, half suspecting a hoax, and badgered beyond all endurance by the repeated strokes of Sheridan's merciless pleasantry, the puzzled, panic-stricken underling grasped readily at the first excuse for getting rid of his tormentors, who left him in his chair exhausted, like a criminal reprieved from death just as the drop was about to fall.

Stories like the foregoing throw some light, however feeble, on a few at least of those leading traits which make up the humorous side of Sheridan's character. Of those choice pearls of wit and fancy which he used to string together for the delight of his daily hearers, his last biographer has no more samples to give than his first. Moore has told us of his bad spelling, criticized some of his figures of speech, and scrutinized his method of composition; but to those quick flashes of repartee, that rolling fire of light raillery, those sharp vollies of glowing satire, that dropping flight of epigrams on all things and persons for which Sheridan was most renowned in his own day, neither Moore nor any other living writer has found or thought it possible to do justice. We must still draw on our own imaginations to fill up the portrait of one to whom Byron dearly loved to listen, and whom Fox declared to be the wittiest man he had ever met with. We must still be fain to take Byron's word—and better authority we could not have—for the "superb" way in which his friend

could "cut up Whitbread, quiz Madame de Staël, annihilate Colman, and do little less by some others of good fame and ability." A detailed yet comprehensive view of his "most excellent differences" may never be revealed, perhaps, by future writers. But to some phases of his social character the "Octogenarian" has certainly brought us a few steps nearer than before. Having lived so long beside the rose, he has retained a dim suggestion of the rose's peculiar sweetness; and amid the waste of his own innate prosiness, some touch of the master's playful genius lingers here and there in speechful protest against the surrounding ruin. From these tokens we may infer that Sheridan's power of telling a good story was no less remarkable than the strength of easy assurance, and the wonderful play of ready inventive wit which carried him and his friends out of so many desperate scrapes, while they inevitably raised him into the hero of the adventures he told so well. Never abashed under any circumstances, easy-tempered, full of fun and artful resources, graceful in manner, warm, hearty, glowing, humorous, and fluent in speech; good-looking, with eyes of peculiar brilliance; he might have sat for the model of a thorough Irish gentleman both in his merits and his defects.

But we must return to Sheridan's Parliamentary doings. His earlier speeches, we said, were few, short, and simple, as if he were determined to bide his time, and carefully feel his way to future dis-

tinction. In short, but sharp, attacks on Pitt, Rigby, and other leading opponents, in bursts of eloquent remonstrance against measures that seemed dangerous to the public welfare, or fatal to the interests of his Irish fatherland, he gave ample grounds for hoping or fearing the further development of his latent powers. Ruffled beyond his wont by one of these attacks, Pitt endeavoured to crush his daring opponent by an elaborate tissue of sarcastic allusions to his great success on another stage. But Pitt's irony was returned with fatal interest by Sheridan. After a brief remark on the good taste of such personal reflections, the latter went on to say that his next essay in that line to which the right honourable gentleman had so flatteringly alluded might be an attempt, however presumptuous, to improve on one of Ben Jonson's best characters—the character of the *Angry Boy*, in the *Alchemist*. The joke ran triumphantly over the town, but the author of it was never furnished with such another inducement to a like revenge.

Quietly and surely the member for Stafford won his way into the first rank of English orators, during an epoch fruitful in men who could "command the applause of listening senates." The talent that once seemed so doubtful began to assert itself in a most convincing way. His friends soon learned to regard him as one of the strongest champions of their cause. But that which first stamped him before all the world as "the worthy rival of the

wondrous Three," was the remarkable effect produced on his hearers by the two famous speeches he delivered against Warren Hastings in the House of Commons, and soon after in Westminster Hall. Of the former of those eagle-flights of full-grown genius, taken in support of Burke's motion for the impeachment of that great, but unscrupulous, Indian ruler, who built up the fortunes and enlarged the sway of his employers by forcing one rajah into open hostility, obtaining provinces instead of money-payment from another, and helping a third to fleece his own mother and sisters of nearly all their enormous wealth, nothing like a passable record—nothing, indeed, worthy to be called a record—has been preserved. Those were not the days of open speaking and shorthand reporters, and Sheridan himself had evidently trusted to the inspiration of the moment for the fit clothing of his precollected details. But nearly every one must remember how the debate was adjourned, to give the astonished audience time to recover from the dazzling enchantments of a display which the "wondrous Three" themselves, Pitt, Burke, and Fox, agreed in placing above all the most wonderful performances of ancient or modern times. As one result of it, Burke's motion was carried triumphantly; and the next year, 1788, saw the beginning of that great impeachment which Lord Macaulay has described so well, and which lasted long enough to tire out the energies and choke the interest of all concerned.

As one of the managers of this long trial, Sheridan spoke for four days in Westminster Hall, on the very subject of his former masterpiece, to wit, Hastings' ill-treatment of the Benares rajah and the Oude princesses. For four days the great, noble, and beautiful of the land hung on the eloquence which came fresh and full from a fountain which no previous effort had drained low. This second oration seemed, if that were possible, to surpass the first, as it certainly met with a kinder fate, having been copied out from the shorthand notes of a comparatively faithful reporter. Few speeches appear to justify on perusal the homage they received when first spoken; and, on the other hand, we hear of men like Burke, whose essays, beautiful as they are to read, often fell quite flatly on the ears of a thinned and ever thinning house. In Sheridan's case, however, there are many passages in the printed speech whose real merits help us to account for the charmed enthusiasm felt by one and all of those to whom it was originally addressed. In them we do discover, reflected through the haze of an imperfect memory, the author's wonderful power of giving full and varied expression to all the different feelings called up by his great theme. In spite of the reporter's manifest shortcomings, they seem to unfold the fiery invective and haughty scorn of Chatham, the lofty declamation of Pitt, the moral warmth and teeming imagery of Burke, the close, clear-headed reasoning of Fox, interwoven with all the shrewd

wit, the searching raillery, the glancing sarcasm, the showered irony, which alternately delight and dazzle the reader of the *School for Scandal* or the *Critic*. Here, at least, Sheridan had realised the promise contained in his boastful answer to Woodfall's criticism, and proved to Pitt himself how little reason he ever had to sneer at the talents of such a rival.

This was the proudest and perhaps the happiest moment of his life. His late success had surprised even his warmest admirers, and drawn forth something like a hearty congratulation from his cold, calculating brother, Charles. His fond wife and faithful sister poured out their warm hearts in letters to each other and to their friends. The praises of two such women must have filled the cup of "their dear Dick's triumph" to the brim. Looking back to those earlier days, when he came, unknown, penniless, and unfriended, to woo and win a young maiden known for her accomplishments far and wide, and courted by many rich and powerful suitors, the player's son might well be proud of having fought his way, by his own unaided efforts, in the space of comparatively few years, to a height as lofty in itself, as it must have out-topped even his own great expectations. Henceforth, whatever services he might still render his country, he could hardly better himself in respect of social, political, or literary distinction. He had raised his wife far above the station wherein he found her; his domestic happiness was complete; his wordly affairs were unusually pros-

perous; and his life had not yet reached that stage when the pleasures of hope begin to melt away into the calmer delights of memory.

But the clouds were already gathering behind which the sun of Sheridan was doomed after many days to set. The first moanings of the fearful French Revolution were even then to be heard, and when ere long the storm itself burst over the realm of Louis XVI. in a tortent of blood and havoc, whose traces will be mourned for centuries to come, the political doctrines of Sheridan's party ceased to find favour in the eyes of most Englishmen, and the "great Minister" sailed on more and more proudly before the wind of that popular feeling, against which his opponents found themselves beating for long years in vain. Burke's defection from his old colleagues produced a gap in their ranks, and a weakness in their aggressive forces, which all Sheridan's finest speeches, backed by the skilfullest manœuvrings of Devonshire House, failed to repair. In vain did Fox and Sheridan declaim against British interference with French affairs, against the Treason Bill, the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and other measures which a period fraught with unwonted danger seemed in Pitt's eyes to demand. Sheridan's bold eloquence and prompt advice to the Ministry on the outbreak of Parker's Mutiny at the Nore saved the country, and turned back for a while the ebbing tide of his own popularity: but the hopes of his party kept falling lower and lower, until Fox himself was fain

to retire despairingly from his place in Parliament for some years. Their prospects were not improved by the adherence of some of them under Sheridan himself to the ministry formed by Mr. Addington, while Fox and others held aloof, or leagued themselves with the loudest advocates for the continuance of a war to which that Ministry had succeeded in putting an end. Under the administration of Fox and Lord Grenville, in which Sheridan took the low post of Treasurer to the Navy, the Whig party regained some of its lost stragglers; but the death of Fox and the threatening movements of the "Corsican Usurper" reduced it ere long to its old state of passive resistance.

Once more Sheridan found himself blown adrift from the harbour in which he had so lately cast anchor. Still there was hope for him in the growing illness of the poor old King. But that hope too was cut away, when the newly-appointed Prince Regent turned the cold shoulder on ancient friends, and gave entire support to his father's ministers. Another chance was still left him. The Regent offered him a post in the Tory Cabinet, on the same easy conditions by which the King himself had sought to retain him in the place he held under Lord Grenville. But what he had refused the father, he was still less willing to yield to the son. When the Regent, with a sneer at his folly, further asked him at least to refrain from opposing Ministers on the Roman Catholic Question, Sheridan answered with

lofty pride, that he could in one way only meet the wishes of his old patron, by "declining the honour of a seat in the next Parliament." The proffered sacrifice seems to have been accepted, for, after that Session, Sheridan never sat again, nor from that day did the proud Irish gentleman ever enter the doors of Carlton House.

Meanwhile, he had been undergoing yet harder trials than these—trials harder for him to bear, and more hurtful to the weaker side of his moral nature. In the year of his great triumph at Westminster Hall, his father died, having lived just long enough to be fully reconciled to the son whose worth he had never really acknowledged till then. Shortly before this he had lost his sister-in-law, the wife of his friend Tickell, and a constant inmate of his own roof-tree. Five years afterwards, his own fond wife, the partner of his early struggles, the sharer and part-promoter of his highest achievements, followed her sister to the grave by the same dark road of premature decay. Her death determined his future for evil, nearly as much as her life had influenced his past for good. In losing her he lost his better angel—the faithful counsellor, true friend, and sweet mistress, to whose side he returned with a keener relish from the passing allurements of a midnight revel, or the feverish excitement of a hot debate. To the many charms of a lovely, virtuous, sweet-tempered wife, she added the shining talents of an Aspasia, and the solid helpfulness of a hardworking

secretary. She would copy out for her husband page after page of his puzzling manuscript, supply him with matter carefully compiled for his forthcoming speech, or write him long letters full of politics and business, relieved by little bits of playful affection, such as Ethel might have written to Clive Newcome; and all such tasks would seem to cost her no greater effort than the writing notes of invitation to one of her pleasant parties, or the singing of one of her husband's favourite songs. One only sister remained behind to share the grief and lighten the desolation of the heartbroken widower.* But she too was speedily swept away by the same cruel disease, and the last of that "nest of nightingales," as Dr. Burney had called the Linley sisters, had ceased to sing for ever in this world.

Henceforth Sheridan's affairs went more and more wrong. He had no one to look after him now, no pleasant home to lure him back from those scenes of dissipation and excitement to which he resorted more than ever, in the vain hope of drowning those bitter remembrances which haunted him in his quiet hours, and stung him into fresh tears whenever he sat down to his lonely breakfast-table. His son, Tom, a boy of much promise, and one little girl, to whom he clung as the last relic of former happiness, afforded him at this time what little solace he could gather from the kind attentions of the one,

* So says the Octogenarian. According to Moore, however, Maria Linley died in 1785, seven years before Mrs. Sheridan.

and the childish prattlings of the other. But the child, a poor weakly thing, soon faded away; and old Linley himself, broken down with repeated sorrows, departed also to his rest about the same time. A growing fondness for young Tom, who inherited many of his father's peculiar gifts, was the last remaining charm that flickered over the downward course of Sheridan's latter days. The gleam of another dawn did, indeed, flash out on it for a few months after his second marriage in 1795—that "sort of tribute to the happiness of a first marriage" which so many widowers are wont to pay. But with all her amiable qualities, the second wife could not replace the first, and differences slowly sprang up between them, which the interference of zealous friends, and some inherent flaw in their own tempers, kept continually alive.

A change for the worse too began to show itself in Sheridan's pecuniary prospects. The rebuilding of Drury Lane Theatre entailed expenses which all the acting of John Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, and other first-rate performers, and all the attractions of new plays bearing at least the name of Sheridan, hardly succeeded in making good. Still, on the whole, his management, now shared by his son, kept the property above water, and matters went on swimmingly enough, until one fatal night in February, 1809, the new theatre was burnt to the ground, and the great bulk of Sheridan's fortunes lay buried in its smouldering ruins. Even then, as

he sat stunned in a neighbouring coffee-house, and sought to drown care in glass after glass of wine, his ruling spirit still kept the upper hand. "Surely a man may take wine by his own fireside!" was the answer he gave to Michael Kelly, on that gentleman's expressing his amazement at such a display of seeming indifference. It was a dreary sort of joke, and, to our thinking, betokened only the unnatural calmness of despair.

From that night Sheridan's buoyant spirits began to fail him, and the old fitful energy gave no signs of blazing up again. His friend, Peter Moore, managed to save for him and his son Tom—his wife had been already provided for—some sixty thousand pounds, by a sale of their joint interests in the ruined property. Ere long the son was driven, by threatenings of his mother's complaint, to seek a milder climate, first in Madeira, and afterwards at the Cape. Few of his old friends remained to comfort or advise the lonely father. The dearest of all, his sister, Mrs. Lefanu, had long since left his side to keep house for her husband in Dublin. A growing quarrel with Whitbread and his fellow-managers was not likely to be allayed by Sheridan's cutting jokes on the new chairman's rejected rhymes, written to celebrate the opening of his new theatre. The "poulterer's description of a phœnix" rankled deep in the poetaster's memory, and led, no doubt, to some acts of poor revenge on the witty offender. At any rate both Sheridan and his wife deemed themselves un-

fairly treated by the new management, who seemed to have failed in the needful courtesies, if not in more serious respects. After his great losses, Sheridan's credit among men of business also broke down, and duns no longer chose to wait for the payments of which they had ceased to feel sure. His political friendships were breaking fast; Fox and he had lately been very cold to each other; and at last the Prince Regent himself, in whose service he had risked all other friendships, and even his own fair fame, held aloof from a follower too proud to accept his favours, and too embarrassed to be of further use. A few friends, indeed, still rallied round him, and in the company of Byron, Rogers, Lord Holland, Lord Melbourne, Peter Moore, and others, he half forgot the hurts and sorrows of his later days, and charmed his hearers with a flow of wit and fancy, less amiable, but not less brilliant, than of yore.

But the worst blow to his pride befel him in the year 1815, when he found himself for the first time carried off to a sponging-house for some trifling debt. He was speedily rescued by his friends, but the disgrace completely unmanned him, and thenceforth he seems to have sunk deeper and deeper in the slough of intemperance and reckless self-contempt. It is needless to dwell on those last days. The strong able man had lost his balance, and the summer of 1816 saw consigned to the grave all that was left of the great wit, orator, and

dramatist, the true-hearted friend, the high-souled patriot, the tender husband, father, and brother, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The coffin was borne to its resting-place in Westminster Abbey by a crowd of titled and illustrious mourners, whose homage to departed genius offered rather a suggestive contrast to their late neglect of its living owner.

> "How proud they can press to the funeral array
> Of him whom they shunned in his sickness and sorrow!"

No circumstance of splendid woe was wanting to the burial of him whose last illness had been embittered by the falling away of friends, and the growing pressure of pecuniary troubles, and whose last hours were passed under his own roof only through the kindness or calculating fears of a sheriff's officer.

Even while dying, as it were, by inches from the slow starvation caused by his complaint, Sheridan's natural gaiety never forsook him. Like Sir T. More and Anne Bullen, he jested over his last troubles, with the easy grace of one who could meet death as bravely as any other accident of human life. 'Did you ever undergo an operation?' asked Dr. Bain, with a view to what might possibly offer itself as a way, however painful, to save his patient. 'Yes, when sitting for my likeness, or having a tooth taken out.' A fair patrician, who had always admired him and his brilliant eyes,

called one day to ask after the sick man. 'Tell her that my eyes will look up at my coffin-lid as brightly as ever,' was the answer that came at once from his parched lips.

Human character is always more or less of a riddle, and the key to that of Sheridan has not yet been, perhaps will never be given us in full. How much of his careless, idle, procrastinating ways sprang from his natural self; how much from cool forethought, aiding and abetting a secret love of display and startling surprises? He seemed utterly to hate all needless and much needful exertion, and yet he could work hard and steadily for particular ends. Sometimes the previous idleness enhanced immeasurably the results of his sudden industry. The last scenes of one of his most popular plays, *Pizarro*, were actually being written while the first acts were performing on the stage. We have seen how nearly a former success of his hovered on the brink of a more serious failure. At other times it seemed that nothing whatever could save him from deliberately starving out the life of some hopeful literary bantling, or from shutting the door on some fair scheme of personal advancement. He could brave a world in arms to win his wife, he could wait patiently for the right moment to assert his rank as an orator and a statesman, but he never could be brought to look into his own pecuniary affairs, or to decline paying twice over for bills sent in a second time by pure mistake.

Among his papers were found large fragments of a play which he had often promised to finish, but never did. Four or five thousand pounds would have covered his real debts at the worst of times, but he himself never could give his friends even the roughest estimate of what he owed. It was only when he found himself carried off to prison, that his pride was stricken down at the natural result of being continually in debt. There are stories told by one of his biographers, which imply a looseness of principle and a disregard for others' feelings, not quite accordant with facts vouched for by the Octogenarian, nor with the general tone of the character which Moore himself has drawn. Whether the stories themselves are falsely told of him, or whether his love of a joke sometimes overpowered his natural delicacy of feeling, we cannot venture to decide. Nor is it easy to say how far his convivial habits transgressed or kept within the bounds allotted to married gentlemen of his day. His utter carelessness in money matters too often wore the look of something worse than inability to keep accounts. But on matters of wider importance we may pronounce with more certainty. That he had many rare and winning gifts of mind and soul; that his impulses were mainly right and noble; that most of those who knew him best seem also to have loved him most dearly; that his ambition, large as it was and growing with what it fed on, seldom, if ever, outran his high-toned honesty of purpose, or turned his

proud self-reliance into uncharity and overweening self-conceit; that he loved his political principles, however faulty they may have been, better than party, and never sacrificed either to a greed for worldly advancement at any price; that he had a fine scorn for hypocritical pretences of every kind, and a sense of honour not less fine on the whole than most gentlemen of his time or ours,—are conclusions which the candid reader will hold us fairly warranted in drawing from the facts within our reach. How far the portrait here given tallies with the very man himself, we trust that some fit biographer may yet come forth to show.

THE END.

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